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The Yellow Bo

An Illustrated Quarter



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In Memory of
Lieutenant
John Henry Hunter
1922-1944

Bequest of his Father,
Basil H. Hunter, M.D.
to the
University of Michigan
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The Yellow Book

Volume IX April, 1896

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The Yellow Book

An Illustrated Quarterly

Volume IX April, 1896



AMS Press & Arno Press
New York 1967

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Contents

Literature

I.	A Birthday Letter	From "The Yellow Dwarf"	Page 11
II.	Hand and Heart	By Francis Prevost	29
III.	Cousin Rosalys	Henry Harland	35
IV.	Wolf-Edith	Nora Hopper	57
V.	On the Art of Yvette Guilbert	Stanley V. Makower	60
VI.	A Ballad of the Heart's Bounty	Laurence Alma Tadema	85
VII.	Stories Toto Told Me	Baron Corvo	86
VIII.	Mary Astell	Mrs. J. E. H. Gordon	105
IX.	Rideo	R. V. Risley	118
X.	The Fishermen (from the French of Emile Verhaeren)	Alma Strettell	135
XI.	Death's Devotion	Frank Athelstane Swettenham	145
XII.	Song of Sorrow	Charles Catty	157
XIII.	The Sweet o' the Year	Ella Hepworth Dixon	158
XIV.	Two Sonnets from Petrarch	Richard Garnett, LL.D., C.B.	167
XV.	Poor Romeo!	Max Beerbohm	169
XVI.	Sunshine	Olive Custance	187
XVII.	A Journey of Little Profit	John Buchan	189
XVIII.	A Guardian of the Poor	T. Baron Russell	205
XIX.	A Ballad of Victory	Dollie Radford	229
XX.	Four Prose Fancies	Richard Le Gallienne	237

Art

The Yellow Book—Vol. IX—April, 1896

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Art

I. The Missing Boat in Sight	By Edward S. Harper	*Page* 7
II. The Fishing House	E. H. New . . .	23
III. Stanstead Abbots		
IV. Study of Trees . .	Mary J. Newill . .	32
V. The Lady of Shalott .	Florence M. Rudland .	54
VI. "Come Unto These Yellow Sands"	H. Isabel Adams . .	82
VII. A Reading from Herrick	Celia A. Levetus . .	102
VIII. Night	J. E. Southall . .	132
IX. Hermia and Helena	C. M. Gere . . .	140
X. Port Eynon, Gower		
XI. "Three Blind Mice" .	E. G. Treglown . .	153
XII. "Binnorie, O Binnorie"	Evelyn Holden . .	164
XIII. The Artist's Mother	A. J. Gaskin . . .	182
XIV. A Book Plate .		
XV. Tristram and Iseult .	Bernard Sleigh . .	202
XVI. Cupid	Sydney Meteyard . .	233
XVII. A Book Plate . .	Mrs. A. J. Gaskin . .	257

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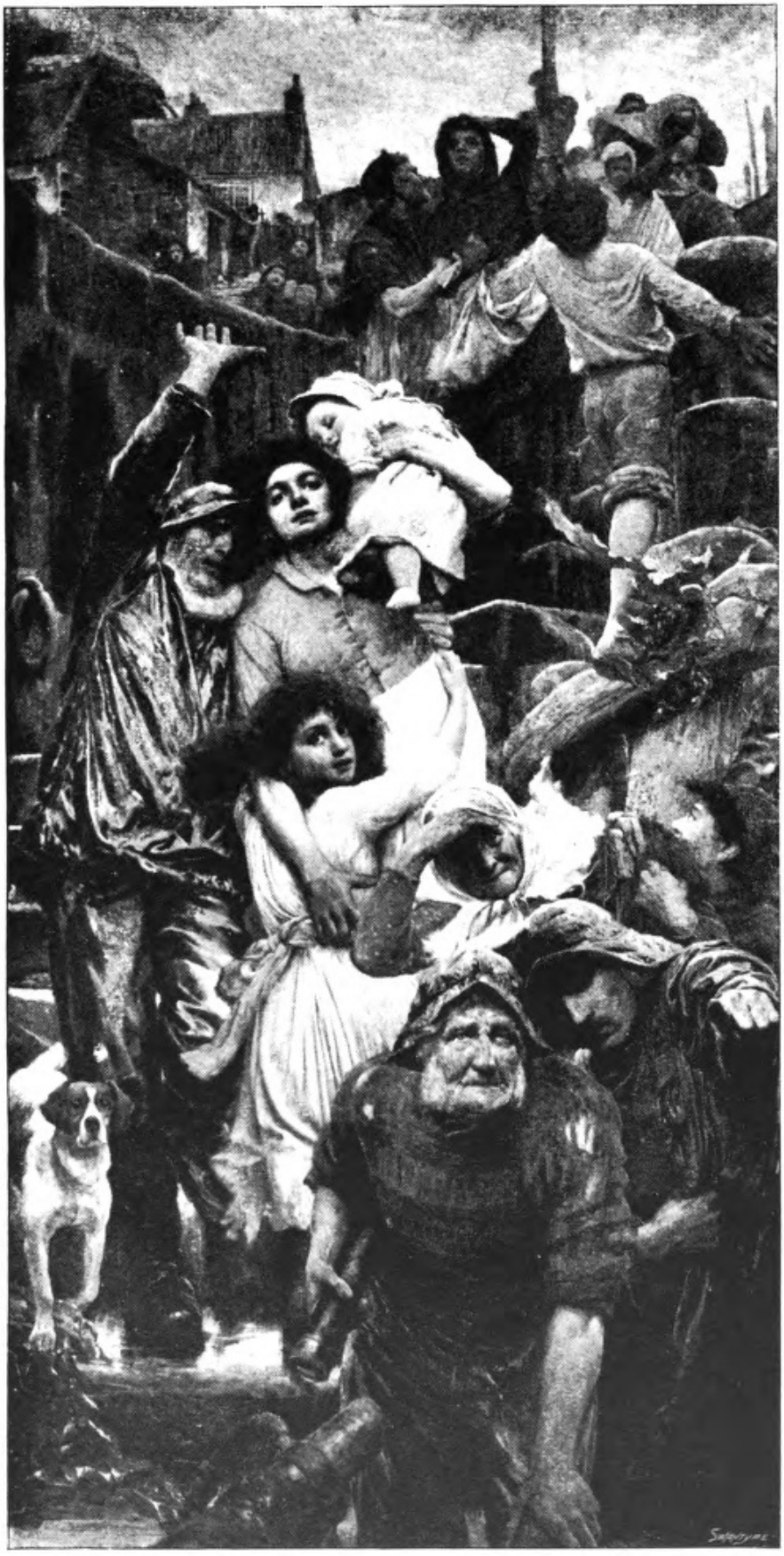
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The Missing Boat in Sight

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A Birthday Letter

From "The Yellow Dwarf"

MR. EDITOR:

I was vastly diverted (as no doubt were you) by the numerous and various results that followed the appearance of my letter about books and things in the October number of your Quarterly. May we not reckon amongst these, for instance, the departure of Mr. Frank Harris for South Africa, and the reorganisation by Mr. William W. Astor of the entire staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette?* And I love to think it was with a view to soothing the hurt I had inflicted upon a whole Tribe of Pressmen, that a compassionate Government nominated a representative Pressman to the post of Laureate.

I was diverted, too, by the numerous and various guesses that were hazarded at my identity. Perhaps it will be kind if I "make a statement" upon this subject. Roundly, then, one and all the guessers were at fault. I am not Mr. Max Beerbohm, nor Professor Saintsbury, nor Mr. Rider Haggard; still less, if possible, am I Mrs. Humphry Ward; and least of all, sir, yourself. I'm reluctant to deprive you of the glory, but I mauna tell a lee. I can't deny—I wish to gracious I could—that you tampered a little with my proofs, expunging choice passages, appending footnotes, and even here and there inserting a comma or

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or a parenthesis in the text; that, I suppose, is the Editor's consolation. But beyond that, you had no more to do with the composition of my letter, than I myself had to do with the funny little explosive paragraph in the *Saturday Review*, which attributed it to you. It was sweet, by the bye, to hear the *Saturday Review* pathetically complaining of anonymity. Are the "slatings" in its own columns invariably signed? Do tell me, àpropos of this, and if the question be not indiscreet, what *is* the secret of the *Saturday Review's* perennial state of peevish animosity towards yourself? Is it possible that in the course of your editorial duties you have ever had occasion to reject a manuscript offered by a member of its staff?

If, as a matter of fact, the elevation of Mr. Alfred Austin to the Laureateship was determined by words of mine, I cannot but rejoice. All things considered, a more appropriate selection could scarcely have been made. Equally to "Press and Public," in this age of the Pressman's ascendency, a Pressman Laureate should be a gratifying spectacle. For me, the choice always lay between Mr. Alfred Austin and Sir Edwin Arnold—on the one hand the Bourgeois Gentilhomme, on the other hand the Tartufe, of the kind of scribbling that nowadays has come to take the place of Literature. Talk of Mr. Swinburne, of Mr. Morris, of Mr. Meredith, of Mr. Watson, always seemed to me beside the mark; these gentlemen are Poets; what have they in common with "Press and Public"? And how precipitantly and perfectly did Mr. Austin prove his mettle, vindicate his qualifications for "the job." I allude, of course, to that singularly pure example of journalese, *Jameson's Ride*. Most people, to be sure, write it (and some even pronounce it) Raid—Jameson's Raid. But Mr. Austin knows

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knows his readers (which is more than I do), and boldly and obligingly he spells it *Ride;* thus incidentally ranging himself with the advocates of Orthographical Reform. I was disappointed to observe that a subsequent performance of the Pressman Laureate's was a celebration of the virtues of *Alfred the Great.* Why this backsliding? Why not *Alfred the Grite?*

And now, sir, can you, can any sane Christian man, can Mr. George du Maurier himself, explain the success of *Trilby?* That the book should have had a certain measure of success, nay, a considerable measure of success, were, indeed, explicable enough. It is the production of a gentleman who for years and years has charmed and amused us by his drawings. Curiosity to see what he could turn out in the way of a novel illustrated by himself, might account for an edition or two. (Imagine a volume of black-and-white sketches published to-morrow from the pencil of Mr. Edmund Gosse, with legends in prose and verse by the artist. I, for one, should not sleep till I possessed it.) And then the book itself is an amiable, sugar-and-watery sort of book enough, and that ought to account for a few more editions. But the furious, but the uncontrollable, but the unprecedented success of *Trilby*—explain me that.

One has always known that to command an immediate success in English-speaking lands (their inhabitants, as Mr. Carlyle vigorously put it, being mostly—what they are), a novel must either discuss a "problem," or attain a certain standard of silliness, vulgarity, and slipshod writing, or haply do both: and if there are exceptions to this rule, they only prove it. Well, one can hardly accuse *Trilby* of discussing a "problem." And as for silliness, vulgarity, and slipshod writing—honestly, does *Trilby*, in point of these qualities, surpass just the usual slipshod, vulgar, and silly English

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English novel, which perchance sells it five or ten thousand copies, and mercifully stops at that?

Oh, *Trilby* is slipshod, vulgar, and silly enough, in all conscience. The question I propound is exclusively a question of excess. *Trilby* is slipshod, vulgar, and silly; and *Trilby* is exquisitely tiresome and irritating, into the bargain. I have read it. Yes, though loth to appear boastful, yet with a natural pride in my perseverance, I may pledge you my word that I have read it. Laboriously, patiently, doggedly, I have plodded through its four hundred and forty-seven mortal pages—four hundred and forty-seven! I have learned in suffering what I am fain to teach. It is true, from his title-page, the humane and complimentary author warned me of what I must expect:

> "Aux nouvelles que j'apporte
> Vos beaux yeux vont pleurer."

But I was foolhardy, and pressed on. My "beaux yeux" did indeed weep much and often, for sheer weariness, for sheer exasperation, for sheer disgust sometimes, before I had reached the last of his "nouvelles." The very first of them was rather a staggerer. Fancy a fellow-man, at this hour of the afternoon, as the very first of his "nouvelles," informing you that "goods trains in France are called *la Petite Vitesse*." But if we once begin to cry "Fancy" over *Trilby*, we shall never have done. The book fairly bristles with solecisms and ineptitudes. Fancy any gent but a commercial gent blithely writing of "Botticelli, Mantegna, and Co." Fancy any scholar but a board-school scholar writing, "Not but what little Billee had his faults." Fancy any author but an author of the rank of Mr. Jerome Jerome writing, "It was the fashion to do so"—that is, to wear long side-whiskers—"it was the fashion to do so, then, for such of our

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our gilded youth as could afford the time (and the hair)." And fancy this—on page 13, ominous number—this dark, mysterious intimation that the exciting parts are coming: "He never forgot that Impromptu, which he was destined to hear again one day in strange circumstances."

Yes, *Trilby* is slipshod enough, vulgar enough, silly enough, in all conscience. But upon my soul, I cannot see that it is more slipshod, or vulgarer, or sillier, than the common run of contemporary English novels. Indeed, on the whole, I should say it was, if anything, a shade less silly, a shade less vulgar and slipshod, than the novels of Miss Marie Corelli, for example, or those of "Rita." Why, then, should it excel them as it does in popularity?

I think *Trilby's* advantage is an advantage of kind, rather than of degree. I think the silliness of *Trilby* is a more insidious kind of silliness, its vulgarity a more insidious kind of vulgarity, its slipshod writing a more insidious kind of slipshod writing, than the feeble-minded multitude have been baited with before, in a novel. The writing, for instance, if you will study it, resembles no other form of human writing quite so much as that jauntily familiar, confidential, colloquial form of writing which all lovers of advertisements know and appreciate in the circulars of *Mother Seigel's Syrup*. Nay, do you rub your eyes? Listen to this excerpt:

"It is a wondrous thing, the human foot—like the human hand; even more so, perhaps; but, unlike the hand, with which we are so familiar, it is seldom a thing of beauty in civilised adults who go about in leather boots and shoes.

"So that it is hidden away in disgrace, a thing to be thrust out of sight and forgotten. It can sometimes be very ugly indeed—the ugliest thing there is, even in the fairest and highest and most gifted of

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of her sex ; and then it is of an ugliness to chill and kill romance, and scatter love's young dream, and almost break the heart.

"And all for the sake of a high heel and a ridiculously pointed toe —mean things, at the best !

"Conversely, when Mother Seigel——"

Ah, no—I beg your pardon—it is "Mother Nature." But doesn't one instinctively expect "Mother Seigel"? And wouldn't the effect have been better if one had found "Mother Seigel"? And hadn't the author of *Trilby* a sound commercial inspiration when he selected the style of Mother Seigel's circulars as the model on which to form his own? No doubt the selection was unconscious; but there it stands ; and I cannot but believe it has had much to do with the book's success. When we remember that the overwhelming majority of people who read, in these degenerate days, belong to the class of society one doesn't know, that they are destitute of literary traditions, that they have received what they fondly misname their "education" at the expense of the parish and that they come to *Trilby* hot from the works of Mr. All Kine, surely we need not marvel that the Mother Seigel style of writing is the style of writing that "mostly takes their hearts."

The peculiarly insidious kind of silliness which, hand in hand with its sister graces, a peculiarly insidious kind of vulgarity, and a peculiarly insidious kind of slipshod writing, is presumably a super-inducing cause of *Trilby's* popularity, one would have difficulty in characterising by a single word. One feels it everywhere; everywhere, everywhere, from first line to last ; but the appropriate epithet eludes one. Is it a sentimental silliness? A fatuously genial silliness? A priggish silliness? A pruriently prudish silliness? Yes, yes ; it is all this ; but it is something else. The essential flavour of it is in something else. If you will permit me to use the word, sir, I would suggest that the crowning quality

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quality of the silliness of *Trilby* is WEGOTISM. I mean that the author's constant attitude towards his reader is an attitude of Me-and-Youness. "Me and you—we see these things thus; we feel thus, think thus, speak thus; and thereby we approve ourselves a couple of devilish superior persons, don't you know? Common, ordinary, unenlightened persons wouldn't understand us. But we understand each other." That is the tone of *Trilby* from first line to last. The author takes his reader by the arm, and flatters his self-conceit with a continuous flow of cheery, unctuous, cooing Wegotism. Conceive the joy of your average plebeian American or Briton, your photographer, your dentist, thus to be singled out and hob-a-nobbed with by a "real gentleman"; made a companion of—the recipient of his softly-murmured reminiscences and reflections, all of them trite and obvious, and couched in a language it is perfectly easy to understand. "Botticelli, Mantegna, and Co."! Why, that phrase alone, occurring on page 2, would make your shop-walker's lady feel at home from the commencement.

I have mentioned the priggishness of *Trilby*. Were there ever three such insufferable prigs as Taffy, the Laird, and little Billee? —No, no; I don't mean three; two, two; for Taffy and the Laird are one and indistinguishable.—Were there ever two such insufferable prigs as Taffy-the-Laird and Little Billee? And isn't their priggishness all the more offensive because they are vainly posing the whole time for devil-may-care, rollicking good fellows? I personally know nothing about the Latin Quarter; but you, sir, are regarded as its exegetist. May I ask you for a little information? In your day, in the Latin Quarter, wouldn't the students amongst whom they dwelled have risen in a mass and "done something" to Taffy-the-Laird and little Billee? I have heard grisly stories. I have heard that students in the Latin

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Latin Quarter, especially students of Art, are sometimes not without a certain strain of unrefinement in their natures. I have heard that they devoutly hate a prig. I have heard that, though you may *be* as virtuous and proper as ever you like in the Latin Quarter, you were exceedingly well-advised not to *seem* so; that if you would "do good," you must indeed do it "by stealth," and not blush merely, but suffer corporal penalties, if you "find it fame." I have heard of prigs being seized at midnight by mobs armed with cudgels; of their clothing being torn from their backs, and their persons embellished with symbolic pictures and allusive texts, in paint judiciously mixed with *siccatif*, so that it dried in before soap and water were obtainable. Tell us, sir, why didn't "something happen" to Taffy-the-Laird and little Billee?

Though I may seem to address you in a gladsome spirit, believe me, it is with pain that I have brought myself to write unkind things of *Trilby*. Its author is a highly distinguished gentleman, whose work in his own department of art, everybody with an eye for good drawing, and a sense of humour, should be thankful for. But the fact of the matter is that the art of writing must be *learned*; must be as thoroughly and as industriously studied and practised and considered as any other art. They understand this in France; but in England people imagine that any fool can write a novel—"it's as easy as lying." That is why English novels, for downright absolute worthlessness, take the palm amongst the novels of the world. It is no shame to a highly distinguished draughtsman that, trying his hand in the art of fiction, he should have achieved a grotesque artistic failure. You or I would probably achieve a grotesque artistic failure, if we should try our hands at a cartoon for *Punch*. The shame is to the public, which has hailed an artistic failure as an artistic triumph.

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triumph. Sometimes, for brief intervals, one forgets how elementally imbecile our Anglo-Saxon Public is; and then things like the success of *Trilby* come to make us remember it, and put on mourning.

And now, hence loathed melancholy, and let me turn to the more inspiriting business of congratulating the YELLOW BOOK upon the completion of the second year of its existence, and the beginning of the third. I have followed your adventurous career, sir, from the first, with sympathy, with curiosity, with amusement. You have made a sturdy fight against tremendous odds. From the appearance of your initial number until quite recently, you have had all the newspapers of England, with half-a-dozen whimsical exceptions, all the dear old fusty, musty newspapers of England arrayed against you, striving in their dear old wheezy, cumbrous way, to crush you, treating you indeed (please don't run your pen through this) as the *book-émissaire* of modern publications. You have survived; and many of your erstwhile enemies have become your lukewarm friends. (I wish you joy of 'em; I'm not sure you weren't better off without 'em.) That is surely a merry record.

It was always droll, the hysterical anger the YELLOW BOOK provoked in those village scolds, the newspapers. I remember reading with peculiar glee an article which used to be inserted periodically in the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, before its reformation, in which you were compared at once to the Desert of Sahara and the *Family Herald;* my eye, what a combination! The real truth is that in spite of many faults (I'll speak of them again in a minute), in spite of many faults, the YELLOW BOOK has been from the commencement a very lively and entertaining sort of YELLOW BOOK indeed; in literary and artistic interest, and in mechanical excellence, far and far and far-away superior to any

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other serial in England—though that, to be sure, you may object, isn't saying much. Consider, for an instant, your first number alone: the printing of it, the paper, the binding, the shape of its page, the proportion of text and margin; the absence of advertisements, so that we could approach its contents without being preoccupied by a consciousness of the merits of Eno's Fruit Salt and Beecham's Pills; and the pictures, and the care with which they were reproduced, and then—and then the Literature! There was Mr. Henry James, a great artist at his best, in *The Death of the Lion;* there was Mr. Max Beerbohm, with his delicious, his immortal *Defence of Cosmetics*, that unique masterpiece of affectation, preciosity, and subtle fooling; there were Mr. Hubert Crackanthorpe and Mr. Edmund Gosse, Professor Saintsbury and Mr. Richard Le Gallienne, Mr. William Watson and Dr. Garnett, Mr. George Moore and Mr. John Davidson; and there was Miss Ella D'Arcy, with her *Irremediable*, a short story which has since made a long reputation. *Wasn't* it a jolly company? I shall be grateful if any one will tell me of a single number of any other periodical one quarter so fresh, so varied, so diverting. I protest it was a thing that England ought to have been proud of. And yet, what happened? Oh, nothing which, taking one consideration with another, you might not have expected. All the newspapers of England, with two or three cool-headed exceptions, went into paroxysms of frenetic rage. The foolish old things pulled horrid faces, called naughty names, hissed, spluttered, shook their fists, and in short, did all that could be done, by mere mouthings and gesticulations, to frighten the tender infant to death in its cradle. The noise was deafening, the spectacle far from pretty, but the infant seemed to like it. He smiled, and crowed, and flourished, and—may live to be hanged yet.

Why were the newspapers so vexed, you wonder? Partly, I surmise,

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surmise, because, like the wicked fairies in the fairy-tales, they hadn't been invited to the christening; partly because you, sir, had perhaps declined offers of "copy" from some of their enterprising young men; but chiefly, chiefly, because the YELLOW BOOK was new, and daring, and delightful, and seemed likely to please the intelligent remnant of the public, and to become a power in the land. The old story of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. "For was there ever anything projected that savoured of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying or opposition." Fortunately, however, there was neither murder nor sudden death. The YELLOW BOOK smiled and flourished, and from season to season has continued to smile and flourish—till now, here am I, giving it a Reader's benediction on its third birthday.

At the same time, however, I must beg leave to accompany my benediction by a few words of wholesome counsel. Brilliant as your first number was, brilliant as on the whole all your numbers have been, each and every one of them, if the truth must be told, has contained more than a delicate modicum—yea, even an unconscionable deal—of rubbish. Why do you do it, sir? As a concession to the public taste? Bother the public taste! Because better stuff you can't procure? You could hardly procure worse stuff than some of the stuff I have in mind. I won't specify; 'twould be invidious to do so, and labour lost besides, for I know your habits of mangling people's proofs. But examine your own conscience and your tables of contents —*vous verrez!* Against certain evil editorial courses, sir, do let me warn you. Don't publish rubbish because it is signed by "a name;" and don't do so, either, because it is written by a friend, or a friend's friend, or a friend's young lady, or a friend's maiden aunt. Don't in a word permit yourself to be "got at." Cultivate your discoveries. Cultivate that admirable Baron Corvo, whose

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whose contributions to your seventh volume no pressman noticed and no reader skipped; those exquisitely humorous renderings of an Italian peasant's saint-lore, which read almost as if they had been taken down verbatim from an Italian peasant's lips. Cultivate Mrs. (or Miss?) Mary Howarth, whose Norwegian story *The Deacon* many of us thought the most notable thing in your Volume VIII. Cultivate Mr. Stanley Makower; and the "C.S." and the "O." whom you have cultivated too little of late—cultivate them. Cultivate Mr. Marriott Watson (despite his tendency to stand on tip-toe and grope for rare words in the upper ether); cultivate Mr. Kenneth Grahame; and if I do not say cultivate Mr. Henry Harland, it's because I rejoice to see that you've never shown the faintest disposition to neglect him. And drop, drop—ah, how I should like to tell you whom to drop; but you wouldn't print it.

One word more, and I'll have done. Don't make your volumes too thick. Your last ran to upwards of four hundred pages; it's too much; it discourages people; stop at three hundred, or at two hundred and fifty. And, if you want to be really kind, reduce your price. Five shillings a quarter for mere Literature is more than flesh and blood can bear. Reduce your price to three-and sixpence or half-a-crown. Five shillings? Lord-a-mercy, sir, do you think we are made of money?

Your obedient servant,

THE YELLOW DWARF.

P. S.—And—abolish your "Art Department." What on earth can any one want with pictures in a Literary Magazine? Believe me, they only interrupt. It ain't the place for them. They don't hang sonnets and stories between the paintings at the Royal Academy.

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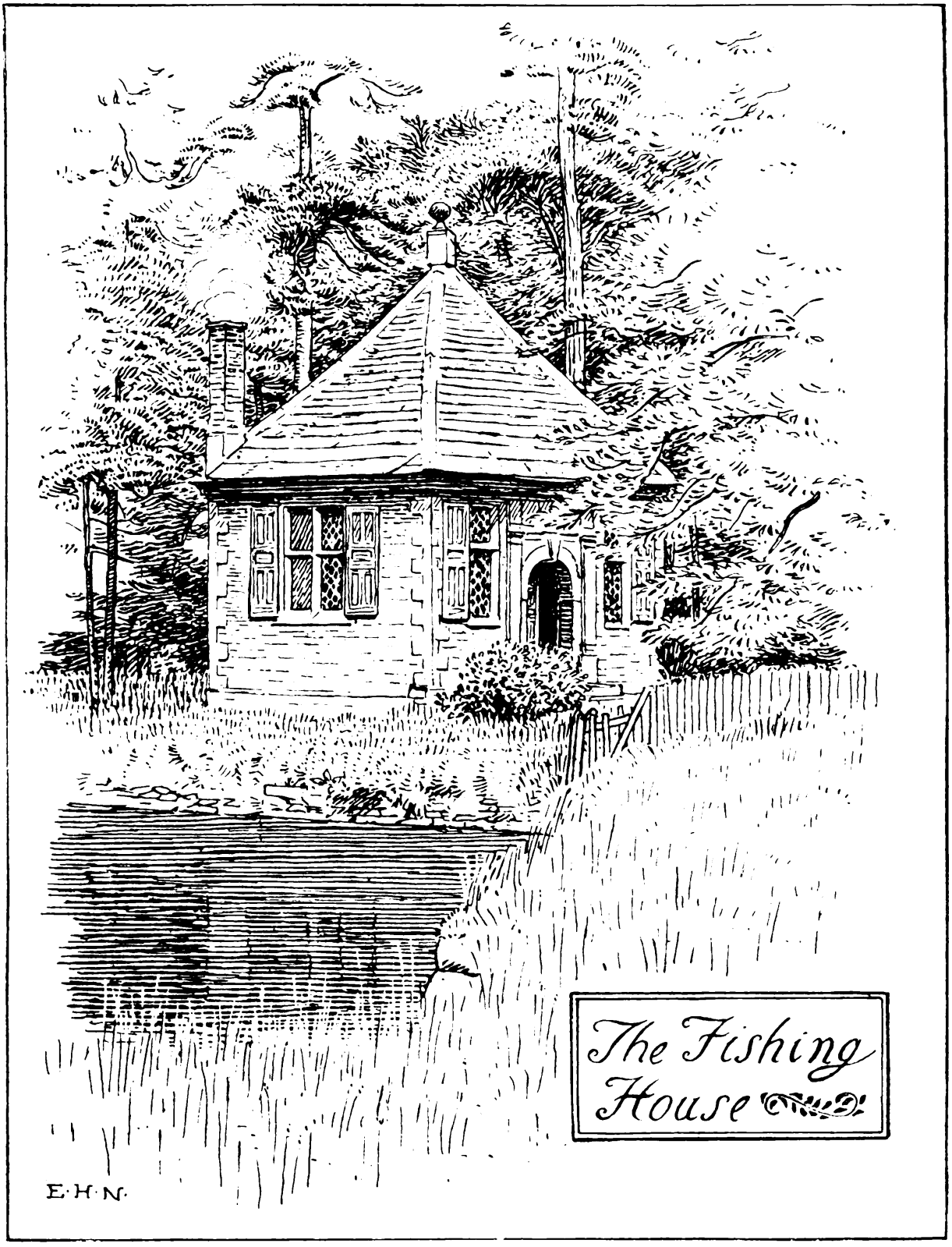
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I. The Fishing House

II. Stanstead Abbots

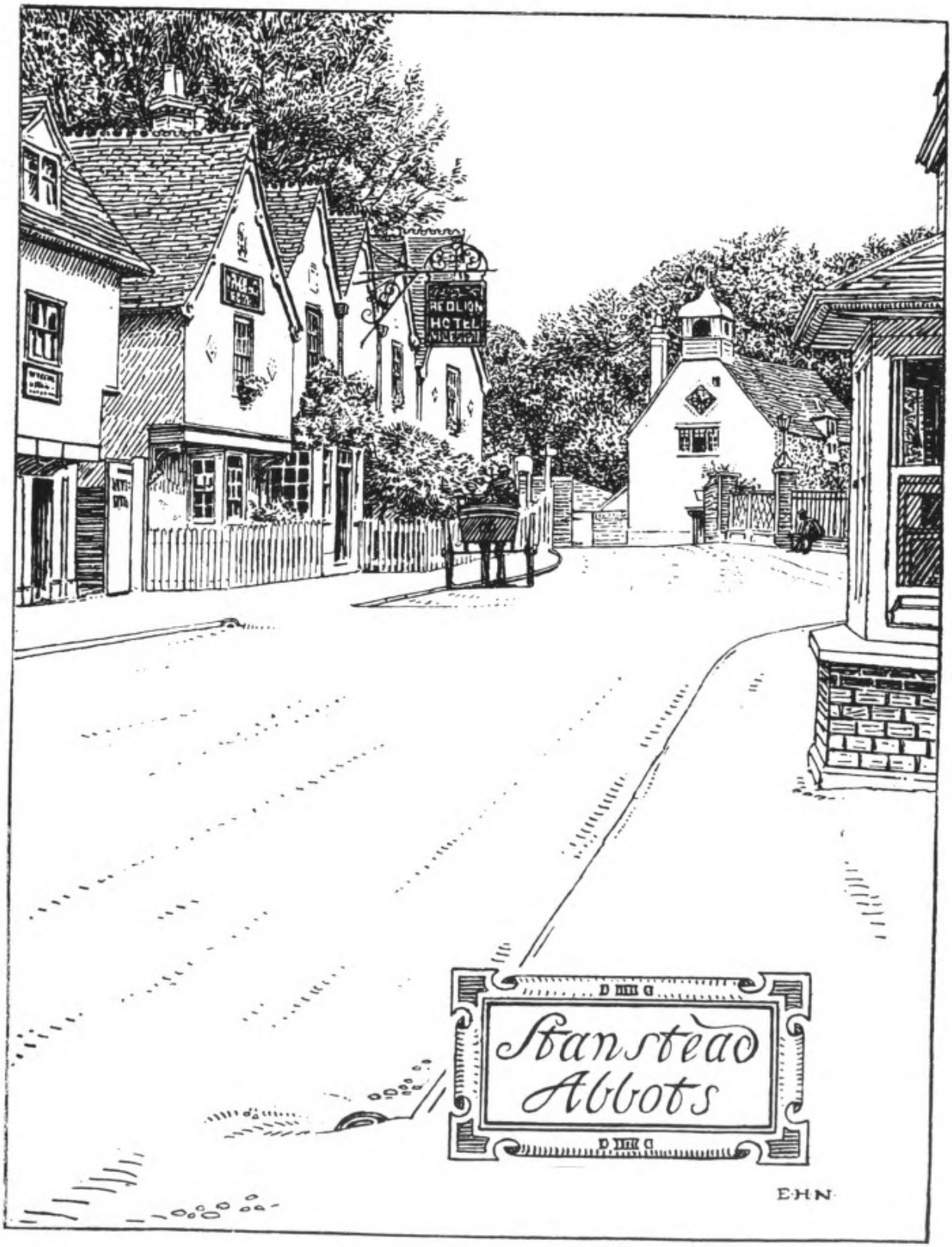
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Hand and Heart

By Francis Prevost

"CLEAN heart—clean hands," he said, and looked at mine,
And caught them 'ere unclasped; for one was red
That had besprinkled his white lips with wine:
"Clean heart—clean hands," he said.

(What meant it? He had whispered, on my breast,
Love's converts should therewith be christened:
And so my hand was soiled at *his* request.
"Heart's passover!" he'd said).

And then he drew the fingers pale apart,
And with a kiss the cold, stained palm outspread,
And pressed it thus, down o'er his strenuous heart:
"So hand and heart," he said.

When, through my thoughts, storm-fire in summer's night,
Flashed the dolt's aimless face I had loathed and wed:
He kissed my fingers still, wine-stained and white;
"Sweet hands, sweetheart," he said.

"Sour

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"Sour both!" I gasped, and shook myself away;
Required my mare: he fetched her, proudly staid;
Tightened the girths, and closed the curb-chain's play:
"So hearts," sadly he said,

And, stooping, set me deftly in my seat,
Pulled straight my skirt, and to the stirrup led
My spurred foot, kissed it, ranged the reins, and, sweet,
"Light hand—light heart," he said.

The soft, brown glove brushed o'er his sun-brown veins;
He breathed as though it burnt him; there, instead
Of its doe-skin, seemed still the wine's wet stains:
"Hands are but hands," he said.

I pricked her; felt the bridle draw my hand;
Bent down an icy face and burning head,
And passed. Yet so, his eyes pierced mine to brand
The "Heart of hearts," he said.

* * * *

The yellow, green-girt road rushed by and roared
Beneath, beside us. Like a silver shred
O'er briar and bank the thin moon swept and soared:
"Hands have high ways," he'd said.

I leant back, straight and stiff, against the reins,
Yet pressed her when she slackened; half afraid
To hear my heart beat; till the grass-grooved lanes—
("Hearts have by-ways," he'd said),

Dulled

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Dulled the hoof-hammers: up the beech-bowered chase,
My face against her glossy neck I laid,
And, with the palm he had kissed, sped fast her pace:
"Hands hold their fires," he'd said.

Her hot breath jetted through my ruffled hair,
The loose mane on my cheek beat out her tread,
And so we cleared the park ditch. ("Would I dare
To risk my heart?" he'd said.)

And, thence, walked slowly o'er the withered brake,
While still his questioning face before me fled,
And where he had leaned his head my arm would ache:
"Hearts ache and break," he had said.

The Grange gleamed out; within its hall I found,
Scattered and torn, my letters lying—read!
My lord sat in the card-room, muffled round;
"I've taken cold," he said.

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Study of Trees

By Mary J. Newill

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Cousin Rosalys

By Henry Harland

Isn't it a pretty name, Rosalys? But, for me, it is so much more; it is a sort of romantic symbol. I look at it written there on the page, and the sentiment of things changes; it is as if I were listening to distant music; it is as if the white paper turned softly pink, and breathed a perfume—never so faint a perfume of hyacinths. Rosalys, Cousin Rosalys. London and this sad-coloured February morning become shadowy, remote. I think of another world, another era. Somebody has said that "old memories and fond regrets are the day-dreams of the disappointed, the illusions of the age of disillusion." Well, if they are illusions, thank goodness they are where experience can't touch them—on the safe side of time.

* * *

Cousin Rosalys—I call her cousin. But, as we often used to remind ourselves, with a kind of esoteric satisfaction, we were not "real" cousins. She was the niece of my Aunt Elizabeth, and lived with her in Rome; but my Aunt Elizabeth was not my "real" aunt—only my great-aunt by marriage, the widow of my father's uncle. It was Aunt Elizabeth herself, however, who dubbed us cousins, when she introduced us to each other; and at that

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that epoch, for both of us, Aunt Elizabeth's lightest words were in the nature of decrees, she was such a terrible old lady.

I'm sure I don't know why she was terrible, I don't know how she contrived it; she never said anything, never did anything, especially terrifying; she wasn't especially wise or especially witty —intellectually, indeed, I suspect she might have passed for a paragon of respectable commonplaceness: but I do know that everybody stood in awe of her. I suppose it must simply have been her atmosphere, her odylic force; a sort of metaphysical chill that enveloped her, and was felt by all who approached her— "some people *are* like that." Everybody stood in awe of her, everybody deferred to her: relations, friends, even her Director, and the cloud of priests that pervaded her establishment and gave it its character. For, like so many other old ladies who lived in Rome in those days, my Aunt Elizabeth was nothing if not Catholic, if not Ecclesiastical. You would have guessed as much, I think, from her exterior. She *looked* Catholic, she *looked* Ecclesiastical. There was something Gothic in her anatomy, in the architecture of her face: in her high-bridged nose, in the pointed arch her hair made as it parted above her forehead, in her prominent cheek-bones, her straight-lipped mouth and long attenuated chin, in the angularities of her figure. No doubt the simile must appear far-sought, but upon my word her face used to remind me of a chapel—a chapel built of marble, fallen somewhat into decay. I'm not sure whether she was a tall woman, or whether she only had a false air of tallness, being excessively thin and holding herself rigidly erect. She always dressed in black, in hard black silk cut to the severest patterns. Somehow, the very jewels she wore —not merely the cross on her bosom, but the rings on her fingers, the watch-chain round her neck, her watch itself, her old-fashioned, gold-faced watch—seemed of a mode canonical.

She

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She was nothing if not Catholic, if not Ecclesiastical; but I don't in the least mean that she was particularly devout. She observed all requisite forms, of course: went, as occasion demanded, to mass, to vespers, to confession; but religious fervour was the last thing she suggested, the last thing she affected. I never heard her talk of Faith or Salvation, of Sin or Grace, nor indeed of any matters spiritual. She was quite frankly a woman of the world, and it was the Church as a worldly institution, the Church corporal, the Papacy, Papal politics, that absorbed her interests. The loss of the Temporal Power was the wrong that filled the universe for her, its restoration the cause for which she lived. That it was a forlorn cause she would never for an instant even hypothetically admit. "Remember Avignon, remember the Seventy Years," she used to say, with a nod that seemed to attribute apodictic value to the injunction.

"Mark my words, she'll live to be Pope yet," a ribald young man murmured behind her chair. "Oh, you tell me she is a woman. I'll assume it for the sake of the argument—I'd do anything for the sake of an argument. But remember Joan, remember Pope Joan!" And he mimicked his Aunt Elizabeth's inflection and her conclusive nod.

* * *

I had not been in Rome since that universe-filling wrong was perpetrated—not since I was a child of six or seven—when, a youth approaching twenty, I went there in the autumn of 1879; and I recollected Aunt Elizabeth only vaguely, as a lady with a face like a chapel, in whose presence—I had almost written in whose precincts—it had required some courage to breathe. But my mother's last words, when I left her in Paris, had been, "Now mind you call on your Aunt Elizabeth at once. You mustn't let

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let a day pass. I am writing to her to tell her that you are coming. She will expect you to call at once." So, on the morrow of my arrival, I made an exceedingly careful toilet (I remember to this day the pains I bestowed upon my tie, the revisions to which I submitted it!), and, with an anxious heart, presented myself at the huge brown Roman palace, a portion of which my formidable relative inhabited: a palace with grated windows, and a vaulted, crypt-like porte-cochère, and a tremendous Swiss concierge, in knee-breeches and a cocked hat: the Palazzo Zacchinelli.

The Swiss, flourishing his staff of office, marshalled me (I can't use a less imposing word for the ceremony) slowly, solemnly, across a courtyard, and up a great stone staircase, at the top of which he handed me on to a functionary in black—a functionary with an ominously austere countenance, like an usher to the Inquisition. Poor old Archimede! Later, when I had come to know him well and tip him, I found he was the mildest creature, the amiablest, the most obliging, and that tenebrious mien of his only a congenital accident, like a lisp or a club-foot. But for the present he dismayed me, and I surrendered myself with humility and meekness to his guardianship. He conducted me through a series of vast chambers—you know those enormous, ungenial Roman rooms, their sombre tapestried walls, their formal furniture, their cheerless, perpetual twilight—and out upon a terrace.

The terrace lay in full sunshine. There was a garden below it, a garden with orange-trees, and rose-bushes, and camellias, with stretches of green sward, with shrubberies, with a great fountain plashing in the midst of it, and broken, moss-grown statues: a Roman garden, from which a hundred sweet airs came up, in the gentle Roman weather. The balustrade of the terrace was set at intervals with flowering plants, in big urn-shaped vases; I don't remember

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remember what the flowers were, but they were pink, and many of their petals had fallen, and lay scattered on the grey terrace pavement. At the far end, under an awning brave with red and yellow stripes, two ladies were seated—a lady in black, presumably the object of my pious pilgrimage; and a lady in white, whom, even from a distance, I discovered to be young and pretty. A little round table stood between them, with a carafe of water and some tumblers glistening crisply on it. The lady in black was fanning herself with a black lace fan. The lady in white held a book in her hand, from which I think she had been reading aloud. A tiny imp of a red Pomeranian dog had started forward, and was barking furiously.

This scene must have made a deeper impression upon my perceptions than any that I was conscious of at the moment, because it has always remained as fresh in my memory as you see it now. It has always been a picture that I could turn to when I would, and find unfaded: the garden, the blue sky, the warm September sunshine, the long terrace, and the two ladies seated at the end of it, looking towards me, an elderly lady in black, and a young lady in white, with dark hair.

My aunt quieted Sandro (that was the dog's name), and giving me her hand, said "How do you do?" rather drily. And then, for what seemed a terribly long time, though no doubt it was only a few seconds, she kept me standing before her, while she scrutinised me through a double eye-glass, which she held by a mother-of-pearl handle; and I was acutely aware of the awkward figure I must be cutting to the vision of that strange young lady.

At last, "I should never have recognised you. As a child you were the image of your father. Now you resemble your mother," Aunt Elizabeth declared; and lowering her glass, she added, "this is your cousin Rosalys."

I wondered,

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I wondered, as I made my bow, why I had never heard before that I had such a pretty cousin, with such a pretty name. She smiled on me very kindly, and I noticed how bright her eyes were, and how white and delicate her face. The little blue veins showed through the skin, and there was no more than just the palest, palest thought of colour in her cheeks. But her lips—exquisitely curved, sensitive lips—were warm red. She smiled on me very kindly, and I daresay my heart responded with an instant palpitation. She was a girl, and she was pretty; and her name was Rosalys; and we were cousins; and I was eighteen. And above us glowed the blue sky of Italy, and round us the golden sunshine; and there, beside the terrace, lay the beautiful old Roman garden, the fragrant, romantic garden. If at eighteen one isn't susceptible and sentimental and impetuous, and prepared to respond with an instant sweet commotion to the smiles of one's pretty cousins (especially when they're named Rosalys), I protest one is unworthy of one's youth. One might as well be thirty-five, and a literary hack in London.

After that introduction, however, my aunt immediately reclaimed my attention. She proceeded to ask me all sorts of questions, about myself, about my people, uninteresting questions, disconcerting questions, which she posed with the air of one who knew the answers beforehand, and was only asking as an examiner asks, to test you. And all the while, the expression of her face, of her deprecating, straight-lipped mouth, of her half-closed sceptical old eyes, seemed to imply that she already had her opinion of me, and that it wouldn't in the least be affected by anything I could say for myself, and that it was distinctly not a flattering opinion.

"Well, and what brings you to Rome?" That was one of her questions. I felt like a suspicious character haled before the local

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local magistrate to give an account of his presence in the parish; putting on the best face I could, I pleaded superior orders. I had taken my *baccalauréat* in the summer; and my father desired me to pass some months in Italy, for the purpose of "patching up my Italian, which had suffered from the ravages of time," before I returned to Paris, and settled down to the study of a profession.

"H'm," said she, manifesting no emotion at what (in my simplicity) I deemed rather a felicitous metaphor; and then, as it were, she let me off with a warning. "Look out that you don't fall into bad company. Rome is full of dangerous people—painters, Bohemians, republicans, atheists. You must be careful. I shall keep my eye upon you."

By-and-by, to my relief, my aunt's director arrived, Monsignor Parlaghi, a tall, fat, cheerful, bustling man, who wore a silk cassock edged with purple, and a purple netted sash. When he sat down and crossed his legs, one saw a square-toed shoe with a silver buckle, and an inch or two of purple silk stocking. He began at once to talk with his penitent, about some matter to which I (happily) was a stranger; and that gave me my chance to break the ice with Rosalys.

She had risen to greet the Monsignore, and now stood by the balustrade of the terrace, half turned towards the garden, a slender, fragile figure, all in white. Her dark hair swept away from her forehead in lovely, long undulations, and her white face, beneath it, seemed almost spirit-like in its delicacy, almost immaterial.

"I am richer than I thought. I did not know I had a Cousin Rosalys," said I.

It looks like a sufficiently easy thing to say, doesn't it? And besides, hadn't I carefully composed and corrected and conned it beforehand,

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beforehand, in the silence of my mind? But I remember the mighty effort of will it cost me to get it said. I suppose it is in the design of nature that Eighteen should find it nervous work to break the ice with pretty girls. At any rate, I remember how my heart fluttered, and what a hollow, unfamiliar sound my voice had; I remember that in the very middle of the enterprise my pluck and my presence of mind suddenly deserted me, and everything became a blank, and for one horrible moment I thought I was going to break down utterly, and stand there staring, blushing, speechless. But then I made a further mighty effort of will, a desperate effort, and somehow, though they nearly choked me, the premeditated words came out.

"Oh, we're not *real* cousins," said she, letting her eyes shine for a second on my face. And she explained to me just what the connection between us was. "But we will call ourselves cousins," she concluded.

The worst was over; the worst, though Eighteen was still, no doubt, conscious of perturbations. I don't know how long we stood chatting together there by the balustrade, but presently I said something about the garden, and she proposed that we should go down into it. So she led me to the other end of the terrace, where there was a flight of steps, and we went down into the garden.

The merest trifles, in such weather, with a pretty new-found Cousin Rosalys for a comrade, are delightful, when one is eighteen, aren't they? It was delightful to feel the yielding turf under our feet, the cool grass curling round our ankles—for in Roman gardens, in those old days, it wasn't the fashion to clip the grass close, as on an English lawn. It was delightful to walk in the shade of the orange-trees, and breathe the air sweetened by them. The stillness, the dreamy stillness of the soft, sunny afternoon was

delightful

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delightful; the crumbling old statues were delightful, statues of fauns and dryads, of Pagan gods and goddesses, Pan and Bacchus and Diana, their noses broken for the most part, their bodies clothed in mosses and leafy vines. And the flowers were delightful; the cyclamens, with which—so abundant were they—the walls of the garden fairly dripped, as with a kind of pink foam; and the roses, and the waxen red and white camellias. It was delightful to stop before the great brown old fountain, and listen to its tinkle-tinkle of cold water, and peer into its basin, all green with weeds, and watch the antics of the gold-fishes, and the little rainbows the sun struck from the spray. And my Cousin Rosalys's white frock was delightful, and her voice was delightful; and that perturbation in my heart was exquisitely delightful—something between a thrill and a tremor—a delicious mixture of fear and wonderment and beatitude. I had dragged myself hither to pay a duty-call upon my grim old dragon of a great-aunt Elizabeth; and here I was wandering amid the hundred delights of a romantic Italian garden, with a lovely, white-robed, bright-eyed sylph of a cousin Rosalys.

Don't ask me what we talked about. I have only the most fragmentary recollection. I remember she told me that her father and mother had died in India, when she was a child, and that her father (Aunt Elizabeth's "ever so much younger brother") had been in the army, and that she had lived with Aunt Elizabeth since she was twelve. And I remember she asked me to speak French with her, because in Rome she almost always spoke Italian or English, and she didn't want to forget her French; and "You're, of course, almost a Frenchman, living in Paris." So we spoke French together, saying *ma cousine* and *mon cousin*, which was very intimate and pleasant; and she spoke it so well that I expressed some surprise. "If you don't put on at least

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least a *slight* accent, I shall tell you you're almost a Frenchman too," I threatened. "Oh, I had French nurses when I was little," she said, "and afterwards a French governess, till I was sixteen. I'm eighteen now. How old are you?" I had heard that girls always liked a man to be older than themselves, and I answered that I was nearly twenty. Well, and isn't eighteen nearly twenty? Anyhow, as I walked back to my lodgings that afternoon, through the busy, twisted, sunlit Roman streets, Cousin Rosalys filled all my heart and all my thoughts with a white radiance.

* * *

You will conceive whether or not, during the months that followed, I was an assiduous visitor at the Palazzo Zacchinelli. But I couldn't spend *all* my time there, and in my enforced absences I needed consolation. I imagine I treated Aunt Elizabeth's advice about avoiding bad company as youth is wont to treat the counsels of crabbed age. Doubtless my most frequent associates were those very painters and Bohemians against whom she had particularly cautioned me—whether they were also republicans and atheists, I don't think I ever knew; I can't remember that I inquired, and religion and politics were subjects they seldom touched upon spontaneously. I dare say I joined the artists' club, in the Via Margutta, the Circolo Internazionale degl' Artisti; I am afraid the Caffè Greco was my favourite café; I am afraid I even bought a wide-awake hat, and wore it on the back of my head, and tried to look as much like a painter and Bohemian myself as nature would permit.

Bad company? I don't know. It seemed to me very good company indeed. There was Jack Everett, tall and slim and athletic, with his eager aquiline face, his dark curling hair, the most

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most poetic-looking creature, humorous, whimsical, melancholy, imaginative, who used to quote Byron, and plan our best practical jokes, and do the loveliest little cupids and roses in water-colours. He has since married the girl he was even then in love with, and is still living in Rome, and painting cupids and roses. And there was d'Avignac, *le vicomte*, a young Frenchman, who had been in the Diplomatic Service, and—superlative distinction!—"ruined himself for a woman," and now was striving to keep body and soul together by giving fencing lessons: witty, kindly, pathetic d'Avignac—we have vanished altogether from each other's ken. There was Ulysse Tavoni, the musician, who, when somebody asked him what instrument he played, answered cheerily, "All instruments." I can testify from personal observation that he played the piano and the flute, the guitar, mandoline, fiddle, and French horn, the 'cello and the zither. And there was König, the Austrian sculptor, a tiny man with a ferocious black moustache, whom my landlady (he having called upon me one day when I was out), unable to remember his transalpine name, described to perfection as "un Orlando Furioso—ma molto piccolo." There was a dear, dreamy, languid, sentimental Pole, blue-eyed and yellow-haired, also a sculptor, whose name I have totally forgotten, though we were sworn to "hearts' brotherhood." He had the most astonishing talent for imitating the sounds of animals, the neighing of a horse, the crowing of a cock; and when he brayed like a donkey, all the donkeys within earshot were deceived, and answered him. And then there was Father Flynn, a jolly old bibulous priest from Cork. An uncle of his had fought at Waterloo; it was great to hear him tell of his uncle's part in the fortunes of the day. It was great, too (for Father Flynn was a fervid Irish patriot) to hear him roar out the "Wearing of the Green." Between the stanzas

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stanzas he would brandish his blackthorn stick at Everett, and call him a "murthering English tyrant," to our huge delectation.

There were others and others and others; but these six are those who come back first to my memory. They seemed to me very good company indeed; very merry, and genial, and amusing; and the life we led together seemed a very pleasant life. Oh, our pleasures were of the simplest nature, the traditional pleasures of Bohemia; smoking and drinking and talking, rambling arm-in-arm through the streets, lounging in studios, going to the play or perhaps the circus, or making excursions into the country. Only, the capital of our Bohemia was Rome. The streets through which we rambled were Roman streets, with their inexhaustible picturesqueness, their unending vicissitudes: with their pink and yellow houses, their shrines, their fountains, their gardens, their motley wayfarers—monks and soldiers; shaggy pifferari, and contadine in their gaudy costumes, and models masquerading as contadine; penitents, beggars, water-carriers, hawkers; priests in their vestments, bearing the Host, attended by acolytes, with burning tapers, who rang little bells, whilst men uncovered and women crossed themselves; and everywhere, everywhere, English tourists, with their noses in Bædeker. It was Rome with its bright sun, and its deep shadows; with its Ghetto, its Tiber, its Castle Sant' Angelo; with its churches, and palaces, and ruins; with its Villa Borghese and its Pincian Hill; with its waving green Campagna at its gates. We smoked and talked and drank—Chianti, of course, and sunny Orvieto, and fabled Est-Est-Est, all in those delightful pear-shaped, wicker-covered flasks, which of themselves, I fancy, would confer a flavour upon indifferent wine. We made excursions to Tivoli and Frascati, to Monte Cavo and Nemi, to Acqua Acetosa. We patronised Pulcinella, and the marionettes, and (better still) the *imitation*

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imitation marionettes. We blew horns on the night of Epiphany, we danced at masked balls, we put on dominoes and romped in the Corso during carnival, throwing flowers and confetti, and struggling to extinguish other people's *moccoli*. And on rainy days (with an effort I can remember that there were *some* rainy days), Everett and I would sit with d'Avignac in his fencing gallery, and talk and smoke, and smoke and talk and talk. D'Avignac was six-and-twenty, Everett was twenty-two, and I was "nearly twenty." D'Avignac would tell us of his past, of his adventures in Spain and Japan and South America, and of the lady for the love of whom he had come to grief. Everett and I would sigh profoundly, and shake our heads, and exchange sympathetic glances, and assure him that we knew what love was—we were victims of unfortunate attachments ourselves. To each other we had confided everything, Everett and I. He had told me all about his unrequited passion for Maud Eaton, and I had rhapsodised to him by the hour about Cousin Rosalys. "But you, old chap, you're to be envied," he would cry. "Here you are in the same town with her, by Jove! You can *see* her, you can plead your cause. Think of that. I wish I had half your luck. Maud is far away in England, buried in a country-house down in Lancashire. She might as well be on another planet, for all the good I get of her. But you—why, you can see your Cousin Rosalys this very hour if you like! Oh, heavens, what wouldn't I give for half your luck!" The wheel of Time, the wheel of Time! Everett and Maud are married, but Cousin Rosalys and I. . . . Heigh-ho! I wonder whether, in our thoughts of ancient days, it is more what we remember or what we forget that makes them sweet? Anyhow, for the moment, we forget the dismal things that have happened since.

* * *

Yes,

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Yes, I was in the same town with her, by Jove ; I could *see* her. And indeed I did see her many times every week. Like the villain in a melodrama, I led a double life. When I was not disguised as a Bohemian, in a velvet jacket and a wide-awake, smoking and talking and holding wassail with my boon companions, you might have observed a young man attired in the height of the prevailing fashion (his top-hat and varnished boots flashing fire in the eyes of the Roman populace), going to call on his Aunt Elizabeth. And his Aunt Elizabeth, pleased by such dutiful attentions, rewarded him with frequent invitations to dinner. Her other guests would be old ladies like herself, and old gentlemen, and priests, priests, priests. So that Rosalys and I, the only young ones present, were naturally paired together. After dinner Rosalys would play and sing, while I hung over her piano. Oh, how beautifully she played Chopin ! How ravishingly she sang ! Schubert's *Wohin*, and *Röslein*, *Röslein*, *Röslein roth ;* and Gounod's *Sérénade* and his *Barcarolle :*

" Dites la jeune belle,
Où voulez-vous aller ? "

And how angelically beautiful she looked ! Her delicate, pale face, and her dark, undulating hair, and her soft red lips ; and then her eyes—her luminous, mysterious dark eyes, in whose depths, far, far within, you could discern her spirit shining starlike. And her hands, white and slender and graceful, images in miniature of herself ; with what incommunicable wonder and admiration I used to watch them as they moved above the keys. " A woman who plays Chopin ought to have three hands—two to play with, and one for the man who's listening to hold." That was a pleasantry which I meditated much in secret, and a thousand times aspired to murmur in the player's ear, but invariably, when it came to the point

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point of doing so, my courage failed me. "You can see her, you can plead your cause." Bless me, I never dared even vaguely to hint that I had any cause to plead. I imagine young love is always terribly afraid of revealing itself to its object, terribly afraid and terribly desirous. Whenever I was not in cousin Rosalys's presence, my heart was consumed with longing to tell her that I loved her, to ask her whether perhaps she might be not wholly indifferent to me; I made the boldest resolutions, committed to memory the most persuasive declarations. But from the instant I *was* in her presence again—mercy, what panic seized me. I could have died sooner than speak the words that I was dying to speak, ask the question I was dying to ask.

I called assiduously at the Palazzo Zacchinelli, and my aunt bade me to dinner a good deal, and then one afternoon every week she used to drive with Rosalys on the Pincian. There was one afternoon every week when all Rome drove on the Pincian; was it Saturday? At any rate, you may be very sure I did not let such opportunities escape me for getting a bow and a smile from my cousin. Sometimes she would leave the carriage and join me, while Aunt Elizabeth, with Sandro in her lap, drove on, round and round the consecrated circle; and we would stroll together in the winding alleys, or stand by the terrace and look off over the roofs of the city, and watch the sunset blaze and fade behind St. Peter's. You know that unexampled view—the roofs of Rome spread out beneath you like the surface of a troubled sea, and the dome of St. Peter's, an island rising in the distance, and the sunset sky behind it. We would stand there in silence perhaps, at most saying very little, while the sunset burned itself out; and for one of us, at least, it was a moment of ineffable, impossible enchantment. She was so near to me, so near, the slender figure in the pretty frock, with the dark hair, and the captivating hat, and the furs; with

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with her soft glowing eyes, with her exquisite fragrance of girlhood; she was so near to me, so alone with me, despite the crowd about us, and I loved her so! Oh, why couldn't I tell her? Why couldn't she divine it? People said that women always knew by intuition when men were in love with them. Why couldn't Rosalys divine that I loved her, *how* I loved her, and make me a sign, and so enable me to speak?

Presently—and all too soon—she would return to the carriage, and drive away with Aunt Elizabeth; and I, in the lugubrious twilight, would descend the great marble Spanish staircase (a perilous path, amongst models and beggars and other things) to the Piazza, and seek out Jack Everett at the Caffè Greco. Thence he and I would go off to dine together somewhere, condoling with each other upon our ill-starred passions. After dinner, pulling our hats over our eyes, two desperately tragic forms, we would set ourselves upon the traces of d'Avignac and König and Father Flynn, determined to forget our sorrows in an evening of dissipation, saying regretfully, "These are the evil courses to which the love of woman has reduced us—a couple of the best-meaning fellows in Christendom, and surely born for better ends." When we were children (hasn't Kenneth Grahame written it for us in a golden book?) we played at conspirators and pirates. When we were a little older, and Byron or Musset had superseded Fenimore Cooper, some of us found there was an unique excitement to be got from the game of Blighted Beings.

Oh, why couldn't I tell her? Why couldn't she divine it, and make me an encouraging sign?

* * *

But of course, in the end, I did tell her. It was on the night of my birthday. I had dined at the Palazzo Zacchinelli, and with the

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the dessert a great cake was brought in and set before me. A number of little red candles were burning round it, and embossed upon it in frosting was this device:

A birthday-piece
From Rosalys,
Wishing birthdays more in plenty
To her cousin "nearly twenty."

And counting the candles, I perceived they were *nineteen*.

Probably my joy was somewhat tempered by confusion, to think that my little equivocation on the subject of my age had been discovered. As I looked up from the cake to its giver, I met a pair of eyes that were gleaming with mischievous raillery; and she shook her head at me, and murmured, "Oh, you fibber!"

"How on earth did you find out?" I wondered.

"Oh—a little bird," laughed she.

"I don't think it's at all respectful of you to call Aunt Elizabeth a little bird," said I.

After dinner we went out upon the terrace. It was a warm night, and there was a moon. A moonlit night in Italy—dark velvet shot with silver. And the air was intoxicant with the scent of hyacinths. We were in March; the garden had become a wilderness of spring flowers, narcissi and jonquils, crocusses, anemones, tulips, and hyacinths; hyacinths, everywhere hyacinths. Rosalys had thrown a bit of white lace over her hair. Oh, I assure you, in the moonlight, with the white lace over her hair, with her pale face, and her eyes, her shining, mysterious eyes—oh, I promise you, she was lovely.

"How beautiful the garden is, in the moonlight, isn't it?" she said. "The shadows, and the statues, and the fountains. And how sweet the air is. They're the hyacinths that smell so sweet. The

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The hyacinth is your birthday flower, you know. Hyacinths bring happiness to people born in March."

I looked into her eyes, and my heart thrilled and thrilled. And then, somehow, somehow Oh, I don't remember what I said ; only, somehow, somehow Ah, but I do remember very clearly what she answered—so softly, so softly, while her hand lay in mine. I remember it very clearly, and at the memory, even now, years afterwards, I confess my heart thrills again.

We were joined, in a minute or two, by Monsignor Parlaghi, and we tried to behave as if he were not unwelcome.

* * *

Adam and Eve were driven from Eden for their guilt ; but it was Innocence that lost our Eden for Rosalys and me. In our egregious innocence, we had determined that I should call upon Aunt Elizabeth in the morning, and formally demand her sanction to our engagement ! Do I need to recount the history of that interview ? Of my aunt's incredulity, that gradually changed to scorn and anger ? Of how I was fleered at and flouted, and taunted with my youth, and called a fool and a coxcomb, and sent about my business with the information that the portals of the Palazzo Zacchinelli would remain eternally closed against me for the future, and that my people "would be written to" ? I was not even allowed to see my cousin to say good-bye. "And mind you, we'll have no letter writing," cried Aunt Elizabeth. "I shall forbid Rosalys to receive any letters from you."

Guilt (we are taught) can be annulled, and its punishment remitted, if we do heartily repent. But innocence ? Goodness knows how heartily I repented ; yet I never found that a penny-weight of the punishment was remitted. At the week's end I got a letter from my people recalling me to Paris. And I never saw Rosalys

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Rosalys again. And some years afterwards she married an Italian, a nephew of Cardinal Badascalchi. And in 1887, at Viareggio, she died.

* * *

Eh bien, voilà! There is the little inachieved, the little unfulfilled romance, written for me in her name, Cousin Rosalys. What of it? Oh, nothing—except—except—Oh, nothing.

"All good things come to him who waits." Perhaps. But we know how apt they are to come too late; and—sometimes they come too early.

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The Lady of Shalott

By Florence M. Rutland

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Wolf-Edith

By Nora Hopper

WOLF-EDITH dwells on the wild grey down
Where the gorse burns gold and the bent grows brown.

She goes as light as a withered leaf,
She has not tasted of joy or grief.

With wild things' beauty her face is fair,
A bramble-flower in a web of hair,

Fine as thistle-down tossed abroad
When the soul of the thistle goes home to God.

Her lips know songs that will lure away
A dull-eared clown from his buxom may.

But never a man she hath hearkened sing
And followed home from her wandering—

And never a man the bents above
Might call Wolf-Edith his mate and love.

Oh

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Oh fair are the women of stead and town,
And winds are sharp on the barren down :

Yet heather blooms in the wind's despite,
And wild-fire burns in the blackest night :

And out on the moor and the mists thereof
Wild Wolf-Edith has found her a love.

She knows not his kindred's place and name,
But her sleeping soul he hath set aflame.

He has kindled her soul with his first long kiss :
How shall she quit such a grace as this ?

A barrow far on the windy heath,
Her love is a handful of dust beneath.

For here when Senlac was lost and won,
Her lover perished for Godwin's son :

Died, and was laid here to sleep his fill
While Saxons bent to a Norman's will.

Still Normans sit on the Saxon throne ;
A Saxon girl to the moor has gone,

A Saxon's ghost is her lover sworn
And who shall sever them, night or morn ?

One in the barrow and one above ;
Wild Wolf-Edith has found her a love.

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And sweeter than ever her wild songs go.
Drifting down to the thorpes below.

Wolf-Edith's pale as a winter-rose
When lonely over the bents she goes,

Though sweet i' the gorses the wild bees hum—
But when the night and her lover come,

He lifts her soul as a flickering fire
Is lifted up, with the wind's desire.

His eyes drink light from Wolf-Edith's face,
'Gainst the time he goes to his sleeping place:

Dead and living the bents above
Wild Wolf-Edith has found her a love.

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On the Art of Yvette Guilbert

By Stanley V. Makower

In a few days Yvette Guilbert will be here once more, and all London will be flocking to Leicester Square to secure seats at the Empire Theatre. The chief cities of Europe and America through which the French singer has now passed in triumphal procession have subscribed to an almost unparalleled success with a truly rare enthusiasm. One obscure town in Europe* is said to have sprung into notoriety owing to an obstinate refusal to recognise a genius to which the whole civilised world has done honour. But this, the sole exhibition of hostility with which the great artist has met in her wide travels, has only served to enhance her reputation.

The extraordinary wave of enthusiasm that greets Yvette Guilbert when she is here is only another proof that London is the most cosmopolitan city in the world. We are constantly having evidence of this, not the least striking being that last year a play by a German author† was being acted at three different London theatres at the same time in French, German, and Italian. Nevertheless it is singular that a genius essentially French, though in

* Napoli—on the western coast of Italy.

† Sudermann's "Die Heimath."

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in no sense a type of France, exercised in a department of art peculiar to one side of Paris, should win unanimous applause from every class of London society.

The crisis which the drama has reached in England and in France is in some respects the same, but there is a point at which the parallel ceases. In both countries the drama is corrupt, but France with characteristic precocity is the first to teach the lesson. It has said the last word about the drama of this generation in providing the glorious impossibility of a Sarah Bernhardt. It is on the great actress that has fallen the task of showing that drama written and conceived from outside has reached its culminating point in the latest manuscript plays from the pen of Victorien Sardou. No one with a personality less splendid could have proved that the history of the drama during this century has been almost exclusively the history of an art entirely alien to that which made Shakespeare a writer of plays. In England we have no personality great enough to sum up the whole situation, and the consequence is that we are still at the mercy of those who line the pavement of the Haymarket with gold to witness "Trilby," or who pour with equal profusion to the doors of the St. James' theatre to see Mr. Alexander in "The Prisoner of Zenda." And all the conscientious endeavours of Mr. Pinero and Mr. H. A. Jones fail to stem the tide, for the very simple reason that they are neither of them great men.

It is to Norway then that we have to look for the future welfare of the drama, and whilst Henrik Ibsen has given a fresh impulse to the literary minds of France and England, an impulse which has as yet had insufficient time to translate itself to any appreciable extent into the dramatic literature of these countries, there is a temporary transference of the popular interest in England from the Stage to the Music Hall, in France from the Stage to the Cabaret

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Cabaret or the Café Chantant. But there is a wide difference between the Music Hall and the Cabaret. The history of both is still to be written, but it will be found that the circumstances, the traditions or the art displayed in each are different, and, more important than all, the literary value and artistic significance of each are different. In England the text of the songs sung is written by illiterate people, the artistic part lies in the performer, and even then the performer is quite unconscious of his art. In France the songs written for the Cabaret are mostly written, as we shall see later on, by men of culture, of University education, and though there is perhaps on the whole less ability to be found in the ranks of the French than in those of the English performers, each performer in France knows that he is engaged in an artistic pursuit requiring talent of a special kind.

Yvette Guilbert constitutes the one brilliant exception to the general statement, advanced with some hesitation through want of sufficient knowledge, that we have more individual ability on the Music Hall Stage than the French have in the Café Chantant. But the weight of Yvette Guilbert's individuality goes far to counterbalance the deficiency if there is one. It is an individuality so marked, so rare, that it almost constitutes by its own force a development by itself, independent of a place in the history of its art, in the same way that the strength of Chopin's individuality makes it almost impossible to put him into relation with other composers of music. Curiously enough we find that during the life-time of Chopin there was the same tendency to call him "modern," "new-fangled" and so forth, that we observe in those critics who have used the word *fin-de-siècle* in connection with Yvette Guilbert. In both cases the epithets are idle. It is the misfortune which attends all histrionic art that it cannot be handed down to posterity, but if it were possible to preserve something of the

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the art of Yvette Guilbert, we should want to preserve the beauty which she conceives internally, the look of inward imagination that comes from her eyes, whilst the simplicity of her dress, the almost conventional quality of her gestures, and the long black gloves, which she adopted at the beginning of her career and has never abandoned, are at the most evidence of an unerring taste and of a distinguished simplicity.

There is then nothing essentially contemporary in Yvette Guilbert, nor indeed is there anything contemporary in the form of the art, which her instinct has guided her to select for the display of her genius, for it is a compromise between the dramatic and lyrical form which has its parallel in early classical times. Nothing could equal the obtuseness of more than one English critic who has advised Yvette Guilbert to forsake this quasi-lyrical form for the drama—advice which goes conclusively to prove that such critics misunderstand the nature of her genius from beginning to end. Moreover, if we examine the qualities which constitute Sarah Bernhardt the greatest living actress, we find at once that they are of an entirely different order from those possessed by Yvette Guilbert. It is indeed by setting the two side by side that we are enabled to grasp more clearly the character of the genius which has secured for each a unique position in her art. Sarah Bernhardt has a personality—a personality so strong that she has succeeded in reducing the drama to a formula by which that personality can be expressed. It is the extraordinary power of that personality that makes her a great actress, and perhaps the predominant characteristics of it are pictorial and musical. She cannot avoid looking and sounding beautiful. Only once do I remember the reality of the situation to have asserted itself over a superb pose, and then the result was destructive. In the last act of "Fédora," in which the heroine dies in her lover's arms, there

is

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is a moment when the magnificent harmony of her movements is merged in the realism of a dying woman's agony. The tiny lace handkerchief (an exquisite symbol of her art), which has accompanied her through two and a half acts of frenzy, is flung to the ground, and with it she seems to abandon the last artifice of a great artist; but this death, unlike most of her deaths, is unlovely —it is as revolting as would be the actual death of a person on the stage; it is outside the domain of art. From this we see that, the moment Sarah Bernhardt forsakes her personality and falls into a realism, she ceases to be an artist. On the other hand, in Yvette Guilbert personality can never be detected, and her realism, as will be seen later on, is never naked or unlovely. You can have no idea of what she is like off the stage from seeing her on the stage. With unerring instinct she moves very little when she is singing, and with an unflinching courage which makes us marvel, she has never been tempted to employ the dress or "make-up" of any character from the beginning of her career until to-day. She pins herself to no personality, but stands completely unfettered, illustrating in the abstract, by a method of intense conception, a number of fundamental truths of humanity in a song which does not take her five minutes to sing. When she is singing Béranger's "Ma Grand'mère," she makes no attempt at looking and speaking like any individual old grandmother whom one can picture to oneself. It is true that she wears a white cap and sits in an armchair, but that is only for her own purposes, as, so far as the audience is concerned, the incongruousness of her youthful face and dress and the white cap only serves to dissociate the mind more than ever from any single character. She gives the impression of infirmity in her voice, and in the last verse you can almost see the mist of age creep over her eyes as she waves her hand feebly in front of her. No impersonation of an individual grandmother

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mother could give us such an impression of all grandmotherhood as Yvette Guilbert manages to convey by the subtle variety of tone and manner in which she sings the refrain :

Combien je regrette
Mon bras si dodu
Ma jambe bien faite
Et le temps perdu.

After this, to talk of the drama as an appropriate field for the display of her powers is surely irrelevant, for, in its present condition, it could do nothing but corrupt and reduce to a minimum those powers of lyrical intensity which are the keynote of her success. Luckily for us there is no chance of her forsaking her present form, for she well knows the nature of her talent. And it is sufficient answer to the ignorant, who look upon the drama as a higher form of art, that eminent teachers of Schumann's songs take their pupils to hear Yvette Guilbert, in order that they may learn the value of words in singing.

It is worth noticing here that Yvette Guilbert has to suffer largely from that class of people who admire and misunderstand. This is a penalty that all public people have to pay, and its effect is not really far-reaching ; but the nature of the misunderstanding in the case of Yvette Guilbert is a singular one. It creates an impression in the mind of the uninitiate that the charm of Yvette Guilbert is that of a very pretty, very wicked, sparkling little soubrette. Such impression is conveyed by remarks which everybody has heard, such as, "She sings the most indecent songs with the most absurd innocence." Young men tell it you with a perplexed look in their eyes which at once conveys the impression that the point of the songs is that they are all that Mrs. Grundy loathes. It is almost needless to say that it is usually people who do

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do not understand the French who speak like this. Moreover, it is little short of fatuous to suppose that a few indecent sentences delivered naïvely will account for the spell which Yvette Guilbert throws over her audience. Obviously such an effect is produced by something far more rare and fundamental—the possession of an individuality without parallel. Indeed, the obscene with her is clearly a mere accident in her art—a thing so entirely outside herself that she can treat it with the utmost indifference, with even a frank gaiety that is inborn, which no amount of study or pose could ever produce—an almost unique cleanness of soul, "under which vice itself loses half its evil by losing all its grossness." The novelty of method, the total lack of sensuality were what took the French by storm; for, wearied by a host of singers whose individuality never raised them above the grossness and sordidness of the *bête humaine*, they had never yet dreamed of a treatment of another kind—a treatment that again seems to remind us of the classics more than of anything contemporary.

Yvette Guilbert is lucky in having poets of no mean order to write for her. Prominent among these is Aristide Bruant, a well-known literary figure of Paris, who was presented to the "Société des Gens de Lettres" in 1892 by François Coppée as "the descendant in a direct line of our Villon," in a speech full of genuine enthusiasm. An excellent review of his chief work, "Dans la Rue," a collection of songs, many of which are interpreted by Yvette Guilbert (*e.g.*, "A la Villette," "A Menilmontant," "A Saint Lazare," &c.), was published in 1892, curiously enough in an English provincial newspaper, in which the writer points out very clearly the distinction between Bruant's treatment and that of other literary men, who have dealt with the criminal classes. I cannot do better than quote an extract:

"This

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"This book is about the life of the criminal classes in Paris. It is the first successful attempt that has been made to do them from inside, to make them talk in their own persons. The way in which they have been dealt with hitherto in literature is exemplified by "Les Misérables," with its long digression on the *troisième dessous*. They have been described, criticised, explained; they have not expressed themselves. But here we have them discussing one another and giving utterance to their own feelings. The treatment of their language is similar to the treatment of their life. In other books it has been introduced as a curiosity patiently studied by the writer; Hugo and Balzac, for instance, discuss it at some length; they point out its picturesqueness; they call it expressive, terrible; and when their characters use it their speeches are printed in italics. In "Dans la Rue" it is employed quite naturally, as if it were the only language; there is no glossary, no foot-notes; and the result is that though half the words have to be guessed, the effect produced is far more real and definite." *

Here at once, then, we have the clue to the terrible nature of the songs in which Yvette Guilbert achieves her greatest triumphs. They are songs full of argot, which has a different significance to our slang, for it has traditions of a peculiar kind, and its history is unique in the history of languages. It takes us back to the fifteenth century, to the organisation of a licensed society of beggars—Truands et Gueux—a great national school of beggary, which became the nursery of all the vice and crime of Paris, which had its Cour des Miracles, and its own especial language in which the uninitiate were instructed on their admission to the fraternity. It was not until the middle of the seventeenth century that this great guild was dissolved, the reason for its lasting so long being that the clergy resorted freely to it, when they wished

* *The Cambridge Observer*, Vol. I., No. 14.

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wished to rehabilitate a failing credit by the performance of miracles. Members of the fraternity would simulate diseases for years, until they were well known as lepers, paralytics, or epileptics, and when a religious procession passed in the street they would, by previous arrangement with the clergy, stagger up to the shrine, and rise healed, to the delight of the populace.

The argot of Bruant is not, of course, the pure argot of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. On the dissolution of the Guild of Beggars in 1656, the argot of the streets began to make its way into the older language, and the confusion was still further increased by the publication of songs and novels in which a mixed argot was freely introduced, so that the purity of the original language of the Gueux is gone. But the seeds of the old tongue are still to be found in many of the French songs of to-day, and it is to this we must look for an explanation of the hideous character of many of the songs which Yvette Guilbert sings. We must remember that she is singing a language, the traditions of which are associated with the criminal classes, a language of vice and blood, poor in relation to the number of objects denoted, but rising in vocabulary when we want words to express drunkenness, assault, profligacy. In a small dictionary of French argot we find in the introduction the following table of words :

To denote	"Eating"	10 words.
„	"Drinking"	20 „
„	"Drunkenness"	40 „
„	"Money"	60 „
„	"Prostitute"	80 „

And the only word which is used to mean an honest man is the contemptuous *simple*, while the horror of the language is here and there redeemed by such touches of fancy as *fée* to mean a young girl.

Enough

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Enough has now been said to show conclusively that there is far deeper reason for the use of obscene words in these songs than the idle desire to raise a smile on the face of the young man who has an insatiable thirst for what is depraved, and who spends most of his time retailing dubious after-dinner stories to his friends.

Beside Aristide Bruant stands Jules Jouy, whose work Yvette Guilbert interprets with perhaps even greater success, and examples of which we have heard in "La Soularde" and "Morphinée"—both very remarkable, but "La Soularde" the more successful of the two, owing to its far greater simplicity. Indeed, in this song, the art of Yvette Guilbert is exhibited in its perfection, and here the history of how it came to be written throws an interesting light on the success that it has achieved.

It was Yvette Guilbert herself who suggested the idea of a woman half crazy with drink lurching along the street with madness and disease in her eyes. Jouy wrote the song and gave it to her, saying, "I have written a masterpiece, but I don't know whether you will make anything of it." Then Yvette Guilbert took it and studied it with all that power of intensification which is her peculiar gift. She decided the character of the melody that was to be used, by constant recourse to the piano to try different effects. Finally, when the song was sung Zola was wild with enthusiasm, and the whole of Paris rang with applause. Certainly the song is admirably written. There is a truth in its simplicity, a directness of purpose, a perfect knowledge of the requirements of the art, but no one from reading the poem could dream of the extraordinary thing which Yvette Guilbert would create from it. She threw into it all her imagination, and out of the bare words sprang a beauty which baffled every one. When it was sung in London the audience were taken by storm, and yet not one half of them could understand the

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the meaning of the words. At the end of the verse which describes the people throwing cabbages and rubbish at the drunken woman as she lurches along, Yvette Guilbert throws her head back and breaks the final syllable of the refrain "La Soularde" (the *arde* in Soularde) into a cry of two notes. It would scarcely be too much to call this the greatest moment that has ever been brought off in executory art. It takes your breath away. The whole seene rushes on the mind with a force that is overwhelming. You positively see the drunken woman with dishevelled hair and bloodshot eyes reeling down the street, pursued by a jeering crowd—but in the meanwhile Yvette Guilbert, in modern evening dress, is standing comparatively still on the stage with that background representing a Mauresque palace which has become a traditional drop-scene at the Empire Theatre. The reality of the picture that she creates then is not the lettered realism that is conveyed by any external method, like that for example of Mr. Tree, when he is made up to look exactly like a Russian spy, an Italian cut throat, or a Jewish pianist; nor is it the realism of Sarah Bernhardt when she dies in "Fédora;" but the spiritual realism of a thing deeply conceived, deeply felt, and translating itself to the audience without any delusion of accessories. It is conveyed in the quality of the voice, in the marvellous narrative of the eyes; and these are so inimitable that we are not surprised at the incapacity of a Cissy Loftus to give us a more fundamental notion of Yvette Guilbert than could be given by any one who would put on a pair of long black gloves. It is not possible that she should suggest her prototype any more than a stuffed animal suggests a living one. The best proof of this is, that if you hear the accomplished little mimic before you have heard Yvette Guilbert, you get an absolutely false and ineffectual impression of what the French singer is like; if

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if you hear her afterwards, the impression made on you by her prototype is so strong that you cannot stop yourself from filling up in your mind the big gaps in the imitation, and you come away thinking of Yvette Guilbert, and yet feeling perplexed, cheated, dissatisfied. You have wanted the suggestion of a mind—you have been given the suggestion of a body, and even that a very imperfect one, because of the distinction of physique in Yvette Guilbert. This is obvious enough when we look at a photograph of her, which all the cunning of M. Reutlinger is unable to conjure into anything approaching a likeness; and of the three hundred pictures which have been painted by different artists of the singer, no single one gives any complete idea of the original, though many have caught a trait here and there, and suggested it powerfully enough. In fact, there is nothing sufficiently photographic about Yvette Guilbert to lend itself to imitation of any sort; and when Miss Cissy Loftus tries to imitate Yvette Guilbert, she is like a child trying to make a drawing after Velasquez. The effect that Yvette Guilbert produces is far removed from that produced by any external realism. If we were to see a person imitate accurately a drunken woman—so accurately, in fact, that, were it not for the stage, we should be unable to guess that she was acting, we should feel much the same physical disgust that is aroused in us when we see a drunken woman reeling down a street. We should be no more edified than by the ingenuity of the man who exhibited a picture with a real face peering through the canvas. But when Yvette Guilbert is telling you about a drunken woman, though you shudder, it is not with disgust—for the thing is transfigured by her into something different. You see the scene, but you see it in a new light, with something of the light which goes to make the genius of the performer, and which she has such a rare power of

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of communicating. When she steps outside the characters of the scene, crying out against the profanity of ridicule and raising a plea for the woman to pass unmolested, she conveys by her voice a suggestion of that universal humanity which binds the world together. The subtlety of this is indescribable. It reaches its climax again in the refrain "La Soularde," sung this time in a way which makes us feel at one moment both the infinite pity of the spectator and the crushing weariness of the woman. It is just this poetry of vision which robs these songs of all their horror, for it is in the beautifying of the terrible that lies the supremacy of her art.

If we think over this song, it seems to provide us in its success with a complete logical understanding of the proportion which words, scenery, and music ought to bear to each other. However strange it may sound, it seems to teach us that the Elizabethans were right when they acted Shakespeare before a placard announcing the nature of the scenery, that Henrik Ibsen is the only man who has realised the conditions of the modern drama, and made a splendid endeavour to cut them from under him, that the foundations of the work of Richard Wagner are false. It is just possible that had the great musician heard Yvette Guilbert sing this song, he would never have said that music is a MEANS (in large capitals) and not an END (in large capitals), for he would have been bound to recognise the perfect unity of this song, and he would then have realised what a limitation he was setting by his assertion, on the art in which he excelled. He would not have been alone among the foremost musicians of the time in admiring Yvette Guilbert, and when he came to examine the notes in "La Soularde," he would have seen that they are scarcely music at all, but a consumately skilful arrangement in the nature of a compromise between talking and singing. We can trace

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trace the truth of this down to a single note, in which it is manifestly exemplified, and which is here quoted.



Here in this passage the final note is scarcely articulated at all; it is at all events a mere talking sound and expresses no musical value. Again in the following extract the *musical* accent should fall on the first note of the second bar but the necessity of the words throws it in recitation upon the second note to which the word "mort" is sung, and the departure from the regular movement of the rhythm produces its effect directly. The music and the words have come into conflict, and the words rise triumphant from the encounter.



And when this is sung the correctness and inevitability of the sacrifice of the music to the words is immediately felt. The secret of the perfectness of the relation between words and music has already been alluded to. It lies in the fact that Yvette Guilbert plays with the words at the piano until she finds a suitable medium for the expression and then the scheme is worked into an accompaniment. Thus by subordinating the material to the requirements of the executant a perfect unity is obtained. Wagner too imagined that he was subordinating his music to his words, but it is clear that where he achieves his greatest triumphs in music he is actually untramelled by his text, and it is fortunate for us that he was unconscious of the fact that he was constantly sinning

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sinning gloriously against his favourite theories or we should never have had "Tristan and Isolde" but should have been left to puzzle and lift our eyebrows over more enigmas as incomprehensible as the recitatifs in "Die Niebelungen."

Besides "La Soularde," perhaps the most famous of M. Jouy's songs is "La Pierreuse," which is a great favourite with French audiences,* but which Yvette Guilbert does not sing in London as it would be almost impossible to sing it without the sympathy of an audience which understands and can appreciate what is at stake. In Paris there is a breathless silence while this song is being sung. The sublime horror of it takes hold of every one, and never has a deeper thrill been sent in so few words through a vast assembly of people. The stillness that it commands is magical, the applause at the close frantic. This is the story of a woman who makes her living by wandering about the fortifications of Paris in wait for men whom she entices up to one of the entrenchments. Then she softly calls for her lover who is posted at a short distance and he steals up and murders the victim—throwing his corpse into the entrenchment after he has robbed it of all the money and valuables he can find on it. The cry of the woman "pi-ouit" is the refrain of the song, followed by the sound of blows and the thud of the body as it falls. In the last verse the woman who is telling her own tale explains why she wears mourning. It is for the lover who was caught and guillotined. And then she describes his execution in the early morning. She sees him let out at the dawn. There is the faint cry of "pi-ouit" sent by a brother thief in the distance to cheer him

* A *pierreuse* or *femme de terrain* is strictly a woman who wanders in and out of the stone-heaps that lie round houses which are in course of building.

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him as he goes and then, before he has time to answer, he is cast upon the block. Deibler lets the knife drop—and the head and trunk fall into the box of bran.

As Yvette Guilbert sings this song she transplants you to the scenes she is describing. And when she whispers the cry of the brother thief sounding faintly as it travels across the sleeping city of Paris in the early dawn "pi...i...i...oui...i...i...t" to the man who is just on the point of being guillotined, the effect is astounding. As in the refrain "La Soularde," she contrives in this cry of "pi-ouit" to show you and make you feel through her poetry of vision the whole scene. She gathers up into one overwhelming moment the misery of the woman who is watching in the distance, the speechlessness of the figure that is conducted to execution, and the human compassion of the comrade who whistles the old refrain as he sees his friend borne out to die. You get in this cry the whole feeling of what a great brotherhood in crime means. There is in it a ring of reckless despair. "Your turn to-day, mine to-morrow: pi-ouit." It seems a lot to get out of the two syllables, but hear Yvette Guilbert whisper them and she makes you feel all that and more. She manipulates the last stanza with consummate skill. How the voice sinks as she begins to think of the scene:

Oui, c'est l'autre jour à l'aurore
Qu'on m'a rogné mon gigolo.

Then the choke of horror with which she says,

C'te fois-ci, c'est pas rigolo.

She watches the priest talking to him at the doorway. You see the terror in her eyes, and when she closes the song with the sound of the body falling into the box and the brutal comment

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Ç'a s'fait très-vit' !
Pi...ouit.

it is almost impossible to believe that the simple figure that retires from the stage has only told you about it and that it is a sham. A remarkable feature of this song is the extraordinarily vivid effect of physical violence which Yvette Guilbert conveys by the use of sounds—which cannot be spelt. She really manufactures a language of her own which no one could talk but which every one understands. The same gift enables her to extract an extraordinary value out of a cough or such ejaculations as la! la! ha! ha! (a fact which again points to the lyrical quality of her genius) which often sum up in a vein of gentle criticism what has gone before. The delicacy of the impression is indescribable. We get it in "Ça fait plaisir," and "Les nouveaux mariés." (Xanrof).

In "La Pierreuse" more even than in "La Soularde" we see the power of Yvette Guilbert to make the terrible beautiful. Nothing could well be more horrible than the whole story, and yet even the shocking brutality of the thing is merged in the completeness of her vision. It leaves you aghast, bereft of all powers of moral criticism. You are taken so far down below the surface of the incidents recorded, so deeply into the roots of humanity that the sense of relation between the characters in the song and those of well behaved people is entirely lost, and you come away with an insight into the criminal classes which no amount of statistics and blue books could ever give you. As in "La Soularde" the music of "La Pierreuse" is entirely subordinated to the words, the intervals between the notes very often representing little more than the inflection of the voice in speaking.

Enough has been said for it to be easily recognised that the men who write these songs are of no ordinary capacity, and their position

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position in the literary and artistic world of Paris is one of distinction. But Yvette Guilbert has popularised their work, she has made it intelligible to the mass of French people, and she has even carried it all over the world with phenomenal success, and the peculiar excellence of the workmanship is in many cases not obvious to the uninitiate until the song is actually sung. No one who was a stranger to the intricacies of the métier could possibly guess from the text of "La Soularde" what it really means when it is sung. It is so simple as you read it that you are apt to raise your eyebrows in inquiry and ask where the point of it all lies. The story of "La Pierreuse" makes its significance more apparent, and in M. Sémiane's "Mon Gosse," which requires especial attention, it would be difficult not to see that the writer is a poet apart from anything else.

Perhaps the text of this song is finer than any which Yvette Guilbert has sung. A mother talks to the child in her womb, and bids it not hurry into the world where all is misery and crime. Rich people can have children but poor people have no right to bring them into the world. "The offspring of love," she goes on, "have tender hearts. Some vile woman will tear yours to pieces. Then you will be food for the cannon and will putrefy on the field of battle." She ends with a prayer for forgiveness and begs the child, if ever it raises its hand against society, to spare to curse the mother whose fault it all is. It is truly astonishing to see this set forth with almost Shakespearian simplicity in a language which English people are always accustomed to associate with something ornate. There is not a superfluous word and there is a noticeable appropriateness in the platitude :—

> Mais, là, vrai quand on manqu' de pain
> On n'devrait pas s'créer d'famille.

which

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which we should hardly expect to see in a French poem. Few people would have had the courage, almost the audacity, to be so simple, but the effect of these words in the mouth of the unfortunate woman who speaks them is perfectly appropriate. And the refrain, "Pauv' gosse," (poor urchin—although it is impossible to get a word in English quite as soft as "gosse") could not be surpassed. It brings you down with a blow at the end of each stanza. The last stanza should be quoted to be appreciated :

Pardonne ! lorsqu'il me poussa,
Au villag', sur un banc de pierre,
J'aurais dû songer à tout çà ;
Mais j'savais pas c'que j'allais faire.
Et si jamais tu montres l'poing
A notre société féroce,
Moi, ta mère, oh ! ne m'maudis point
Mon gosse !

Here look again at the effect of

J'aurais dû songer à tout çà.

Who but a poet could have expressed a great thing in a line so commonplace, so simple ? Obviously the poem makes a deep impression on us when we read it—but when Yvette Guilbert interprets it, it defies description. The note of weariness which she throws into it, the maddened hatred of life which pours forth as she says

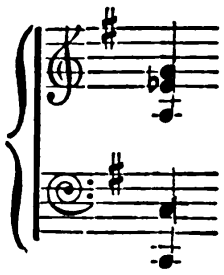
Mais, vois-tu, la vie est *atroce*

the whole of maternity weeping in the two words "Pauv' gosse," these must be heard to be felt. It is almost impossible to talk about them without belittling them, and perhaps the best tribute to their greatness is to be silent.

We

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We cannot however dismiss the song without noticing the music which has been written with infinite skill by M. Paul Hucks, and the key to the success of which is to be found in the use of the following chord :



This is resolved into the major for the refrain "Pauv' gosse," but look how the important word of each verse falls on this chord. Thus in the first verse, "on lui (à la vie) rend *tout*." Again "t'auras *faim toi* ;" again "ton coeur *pleurera* ;" and in the last verse "moi, ta *mère oh !* ne m'maudis point." From this we see that the musician has realised the sentiment of the song admirably in throwing the weight of the balance into the minor key. The notes for the voice are as usual quite simple, and the substructure of the accompaniment is contained in a modulation in less than six chords, but the invention of the chord above quoted is the creation of a peculiar mind. We can single it out almost as we can single out certain notes in Chopin and say "That is Chopin—no one else could have done that." And it is clear that no substitute could ever produce such a telling effect.

The songs described above form but a very small portion of a very large répertoire which Yvette Guilbert is always extending by the study of new productions. Infinitely delightful are her renderings of the songs of Xanrof and others in which she displays the lighter side of her talent, a vein of broad and yet delicate humour and a taste that is unimpeachable. When you hear her sing

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sing "Les demoiselles de pensionnat," you realise how impossible it is for her to be vulgar. The treatment is so frank and direct that before you have time to collect your thoughts you are laughing with the performer at the demoiselles. She has the knack of getting her audience on her side before she has said two words. Who will forget the charming intimacy that she established between herself and the London public rather more than a year ago when she stood in front of the stage and announced "Linger Longer Loo" with a distinct emphasis on the last syllable of Longer? The audience of the Empire stroked itself all over, and took with the most friendly courtesy and enthusiasm the compliment which Yvette Guilbert elected to pay them by burlesquing the popular song of the hour. This excellent bit of foolery never failed to put the whole house in a boisterous good humour, and though her burlesques cannot be put on a level with her greatest achievements, yet they exhibit a humour and a delicate fancy that makes it difficult to forget them. They show again that she has an extraordinary feeling for the value of words. Her burlesques of the American songs are full of a fun that is robust, incisive, spontaneous, and her French version of the English "Di, Di," illustrates the creative nature of her genius. Out of the rather colourless, commonplace English text she makes a thing that sparkles and dances with fun, with at least one masterly phrase in it:

Ne fais pas ça:
Ça m'fait du mal,
Ça froissera
Mon idéal.

But the numerous songs of which she has written both the text and the music afford abundant proof that she is never at a loss for an idea, and indeed in many of her great successes she has suggested

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suggested the idea of the songs herself, as in Jule Jouy's "La Soularde," which was discussed in detail in the early part of this study.

To attempt to describe the appearance of Yvette Guilbert would be folly when even the art of M. Steinlen has failed to give us more than a very imperfect idea of what she is like. Indeed, as might be expected, her physique is as rare as her qualities as an artist. Her face bears in it the irregularities of genius, and moreover it never seems to look the same twice running. It has in it something *insaisissable*, something which evades the precision of mental as well as actual portraiture. Perhaps this is owing to the remarkable imagination in the eyes, which in Yvette Guilbert more than in anybody else give the key to the individuality. There is in those eyes a great melancholy; not the morbid melancholy of a creature unable to struggle with the world—but a look borrowed from the whole of nature, something of the look of infinite sadness which shines from the eyes of Botticelli's Prima Vera: and in that look lies a wisdom which makes us wonder.

Mr. Walter Pater in his study of Dionysus points out the tinge of melancholy in the god's face in that point in his evolution when he passes from the joyous spirit of the country, with its rivers and rich imagery of grape and wine, to the town the abode of human misery and woe. He traces from this the growth of Greek tragedy.

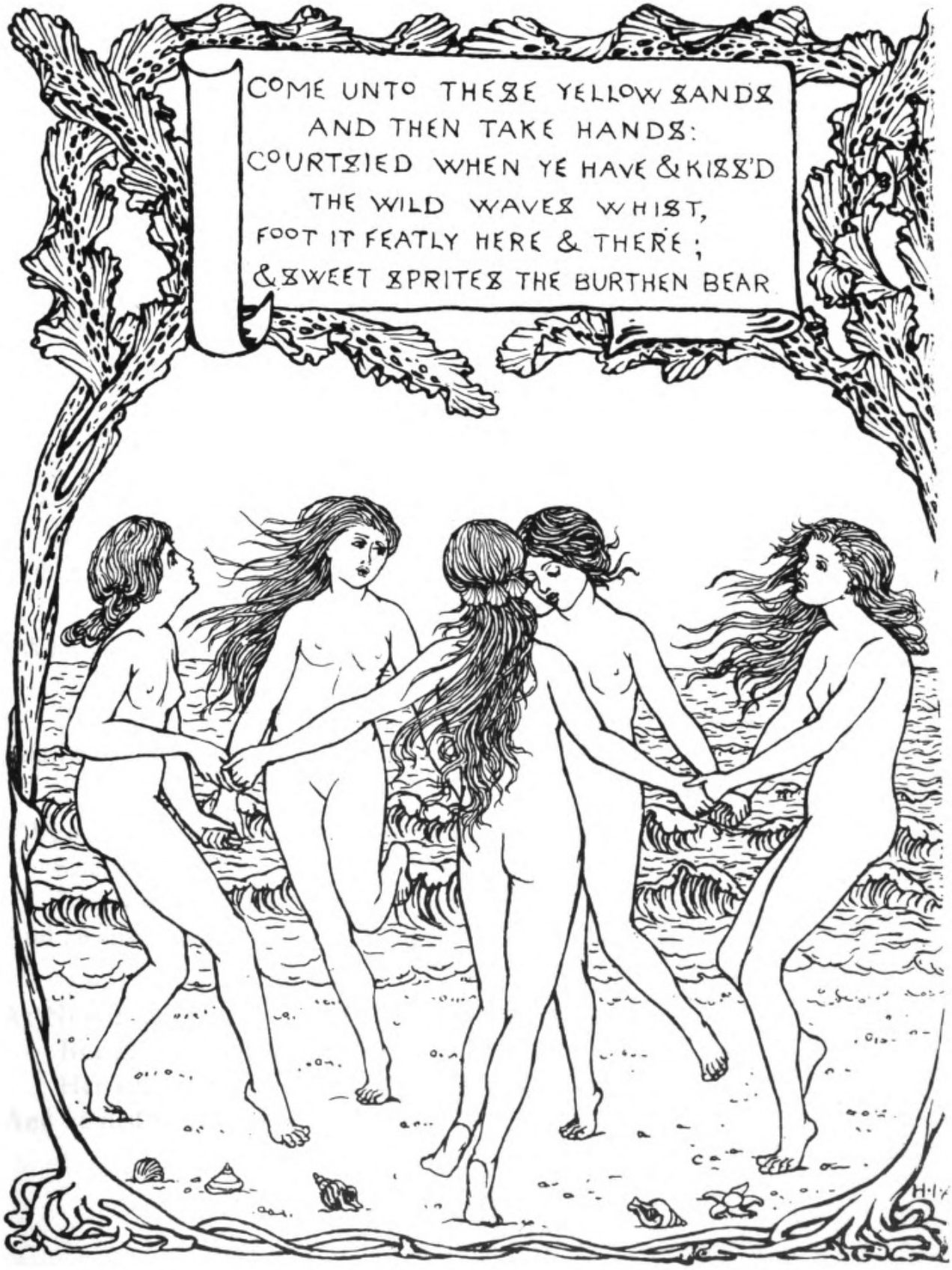
Such is the look that steals into the eyes of Yvette Guilbert when she leaves the rose gardens of her villa on the Seine, to come and sing in the heart of Paris of the joys and sorrows, the laughter and the tears that are born in the great French city.

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"Come unto these Yellow Sands."

By H. Isabel Adams.

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A Ballad of the Heart's Bounty

By Laurence Alma Tadema

"WHAT shines at my window out there in the night?"
Said she then: "For you is the Lamp that I bear . . ."
But his pillow was bright with the mist of gold hair,
And he answered: "I have my light."

"Who stands at my door on the edge of the mere?"
Said she then: "The Jewel I bring is for you . . ."
But his cheek touched the lashes, the veiled eyes were blue,
And he answered: "My gems are here."

"Who sings in the dark when the woods are mute?"
Said she then: "This Music is yours to keep . . ."
But sweet is the sound of low laughter in sleep,
And he answered: "I need no lute."

At New Day he rose, for the bed's warmth was gone,
But Death had smiled first in the face that he sought . . .
Her white fingers yielded the gifts she had brought,
And he fled to the hills alone.

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Stories Toto Told Me

By Baron Corvo

III—A Caprice of the Cherubim

WHEN you have the happiness, sir, to see the Padre Eterno sitting upon His throne, I can assure you that, at least, your eyes will be delighted with the sight of many splendid persons who are there also.

These, you know, are called the angels, and they are in nine rows. All these rows are in the shape of an egg with pointed ends, just like that gold ring on your finger. Those in the first row are named serafini. Those in the second row are called cherubini, and you will find their appearance quite beautiful and curious to look at. They have neither arms, nor bodies, nor legs, like the other angels, but are simply heads like those of little boys. Their eyes are as brown as the shadows on the stream where you fished last Thursday, when the sun was shining through the trees. Their skin, if you will only believe me, has the colour and brightness of the blue jewels which la Signora Duchessa sometimes wears, and their hair waves like the sea at Ardea. They have no ears, but, in the place where the ears of a boy would be, they have wings shaped like those of a sand-piper, and blue as the sky at day-dawn. These flutter and shine for ever in regular watches in the second

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second ring of the Glory of the Highest, and cool the perfumed air with the gentle quivering of their feathers.

Once upon a time some of the cherubini came to hear of the pastimes with which people in the world weary themselves, and they humbly asked permission of the Padre Eterno to make a little *gità* down to the earth, and to have a little devil to play with next time they were off duty. And the Padre Eterno, who always lets you have your own way when He knows it will teach you a lesson, making the sign of the cross, said, "It is allowed to you."

So the following day a very large number—I believe about ninety-five millions, but I should not like to be quite sure, because I do not exactly know—of these beautiful little blue birds of God were taken by San Michele Arcangiolo down into the world, and they perched on the trees in the gardens of the Palazzo Sforza Cesarini in that city over the lake.

San Michele Arcangiolo left them there, and made the second of his journeys into the pit of hell. The first, you know, was after he had conquered the King of the devils in a dreadful duel and bound him in chains and flames for ever and the day after. As he passed along the pathway, down the red-hot rocks that line that dreadful road, the flames of the burning devils licked up till they met the cool air of Heaven which San Michele Arcangiolo breathed, and curved backward and still upward, forming a sort of triumphal arch of yellow flame above his head.

When he arrived at the gate where hope must be laid down, he called aloud that the Father and King of gods and men had occasion for the services of a young imp named Aeschmai Davi. The arch-fiend shook in his chains with rage, because he was obliged to obey, and caused a horrible demon to flash into bodily shape from a puddle of molten brimstone.

If

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If you looked at his face or his body, you would have thought he was a boy about fourteen years old; but his eyeballs glittered with the red of a burning coal. If you looked at his arms, you would have thought he was a bat, for wings grew there of spikes and skin. Oh, and he had nasty little horns in his hair, but it was not hair but vipers; and from his waist to his feet he was a he-goat, and all over he was scarlet. It was a different scarlet to the scarlet coat of that English soldier whom I saw once near the Porta Pia of Rome. I can only make you understand what I mean by saying that it was the colour of the ashes of burning wood which are almost dead, but which you have blown up again into a fiery glow. He was of the most bad and hideous from his hoofs to his horns; and no one, whether he was a saint, or an angel, or a man like you, sir, as long as he had the protection of the Madonna, would need to be a bit afraid of him, because his nastiness was clear, and he could be seen through like a piece of glass, and in the middle of him there was his dirty dangling heart as black as ink.

San Michele Arcangiolo, who knows exactly how to deal with everybody, and especially with a *scimunito* like this, stuck his spear into the middle of the little devil's stomach, just as Gianetta would spit a woodcock for roasting, and holding it out before him, because it is always best to see mischief in front of you, carried the wriggling, writhing little devil up into the world. The flames, as before, licked upward and around the great archangel, but never a feather was singed nor a blister came upon his whitest skin, because they could not pierce the ice of his purity; but they made the little devil kick and struggle just as I should, sir, if you whipped me naked with a whip of red-hot wires, instead of with the lilac twig you do use when I am disobedient.

So they came into the Prince's garden, and having released the

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the little devil from his uncomfortable position, San Michele Arcangiolo—who, because he commands the armies in heaven, is very fond of soldiers—went down into the city to pass a half-hour inspecting the barracks.

When the little devil found himself free, he could hardly believe his good luck, and sat for a few minutes rubbing the sparks out of his eyes, and wondering what his next torture would be. Meanwhile, the cherubini sat in the trees saying nothing, but watching with all their might, for they never had seen such a thing before.

Presently, as nothing happened, the little devil plucked up what small courage he had and took a sly look round. The first thing he saw was the fountain near the magnolia tree; and as the devils know very well what water is, although a rare commodity in their country, where one drop is worth more than all the wealth the world has ever seen, he plunged head first into the basin to cool the burning pangs which always torment him. And still the cherubini said not a word, but watched with all their eyes.

Now the basin, sir, is a deep one, as you know, because you have often dived in there yourself when the sun was in Leo. And the little devil disappeared under the water. But a moment after his head popped up, twitching with pain, amid clouds of steam and a frightful hissing, and he screamed very much and began to clamber over the edge as fast as possible.

When he got on to the grass, he jumped and skipped all over the place, and shook his wings and squeezed his hairy legs, and stroked his naked breast, and rolled about on the ground, and leaped and howled, till the cherubini found him most diverting, and laughed so much that they tumbled out of the trees and came and fluttered round the little devil, for this was a far funnier entertainment even than that which they had promised themselves.

And the reason of it all is very easy to understand, if you will only

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only think. You see, one of the torments that the devils and the damned have to bear is to be always disappointed; they never get their wishes fulfilled; all their plans, no matter how carefully they construct them, fall to the ground; all their arrangements are always upset at the very last moment, and everything goes by the rule of contrary. So when the wretched little creature plunged into the cold water, the heat of hell-flame boiled it, and the Breath of God made it hotter still; and, instead of being cooled at all, the little devil got handsomely scalded.

Now, when the cherubini had had their fill of laughter, and could observe accurately this sight which was to them so strange, they saw great patches of scalded flesh hanging in shreds and strips from his neck and sides and back and belly, and the shining leather of his wings crinkled and warped, and the horn of his hoofs beginning to peel, and they would have felt sorry if to grieve over a little devil had not been wrong. So they said nothing, hovering in the air around him, and looking at him with their clear eyes all the time.

The little devil looked at them too, and, being a cheeky little beast, he asked who, the hell, they were staring at.

They said that they wanted to play with him, and they desired him to do some more tricks, and to tell them merry stories, and where he came from, and what he did there, and how he liked it, and why he had that nasty black heart-shaped blotch hanging in the middle of his inside, and many other things.

And the little devil said that he had had a bad accident, and wasn't going to hurt his throat by shouting to a lot of blue birds up there in the sky, and if they wanted him to answer their questions, they must come down lower, because he was in great pain.

And the cherubini wondered very much where the pain was that the little devil said he was in, and what kind of thing this pain

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pain could be: but, as they were curious and wanted to know, they descended a bit until they formed in a ring around the little devil's head.

And there they became aware of a horrible stench, and they said to one another: "He stinks—stinks of sin!" But, because they wished to be diverted, they resolved to put up with small inconveniences for a while.

Still the little devil was not satisfied; and perceiving that these would be very agreeable playmates, he tried to make a good impression. So he flopped down upon his stomach and propped his chin up in his hands, and invited the cherubini to come and sit round him and listen to such tales as they had never heard before. And the cherubini came a little lower, but they did not sit down.

And then other things happened.

And suddenly the cherubini found that they did not desire to play with this little devil any longer; and with one swoop of their wings, sounding like the strong chord you strike, sir, when you begin to play on your citherna in the evening, they went back into Paradise; while the earth opened under the little devil, and a red flame, shaped like a hand with claws, came up and gripped and squeezed him so tightly round the waist, that his face bulged, and his eyes went out like crabs', and his breast swelled like pumpkins, and his shoulders and arms like sausages, and his middle was like Donna Lina's, and the skin of his hairy thighs became balloons and burst, and then he was tossed back into his puddle of molten brimstone.

When the Ave rang, and this company of cherubini went on duty around God's Throne, the Padre Eterno observed, from the expression of their faces, that they had been insulted and their feelings hurt. And when His Majesty deigned to inquire the reason, they replied that the little devil whom He had allowed them

to

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to play with had been very rude, and they had no desire to see him any more; for they had asked him to show them funny tricks and to tell them merry stories, and where he came from, and what he did there, how he liked it, why he had a nasty black heart-shaped blotch dangling in the middle of his inside, and so forth, and that he had said he would be pleased to answer all this and to play with them if they would come and sit down on the grass round him, but they had to reply that they were not able to sit down, and the little devil had asked why not, and they had answered politely that they had not the wherewithal, and then the little devil jumped up from the ground where he was lying with his legs a-straddling and showed them that he could sit down, and had turned head over heels, and laughed and made a gibe and a jeer of them because he could do things they could not do, and had also done many other disgusting tricks before them, which had caused them much offence, and so they were bored and came back to Heaven.

They added that they did not desire to mix up with that class of person again, and begged pardon if they had seemed to prefer their own will this time.

And the Padre Eterno smiled, and at that Smile the light of Heaven glowed like a rainbow, and the music rose in a strain so beautiful that I believe I shall die when I hear it, and He made the sign of the cross and said: "It is well, my children, and God bless you. Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus, ✠ Pater et ✠ Filius et ✠ Spiritus Sanctus."

"Ah

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IV—About Beata Beatrice and the Mamma of San Pietro

"AH, sir, don't be angry with me, because I really do love her so! What else can I do when she is as pretty as that, and always good and cheerful and patient? And when I met her last evening by the boat-house I took her into my arms asking her to kiss me, and, sir, she did. And then I told her that I loved her dearly, and she said she loved me too. And I said that when I grew up I would marry her, and when I looked into her eyes they were full of tears so I know she loves me; but she is ashamed because she is so poor and her mamma such a hag. But do I mind her being poor—the little pigeon? Ma che! for when I feel her soft arms round me and her breath in my hair, then I kiss her on the lips and neck and bosom, and I know it is Beatrice, her body and her soul, that I want and that I care for, not her ragged clothes."

Toto jumped off the tree trunk and stood before me, with all his lithe young figure tense and strung up as he went on with his declamatory notices.

"Has not your Excellency said that I am strong like an ox, and will it not be my joy to work hard to make my girl happy and rich and grand as the sun? Do you think that I spend what you give me at the wine-shop or the tombola? You know that I don't. Yes, I have always saved, and now I shall save more, and in a year or two I shall ask your permission to marry her. No, I don't want to go away, or to leave you. May the devil fly away with me to the pit of hell and burn me for ever with his hottest fire if I do! Nor will Beatrice make any difference to your Excellency; you need never see her, you need never even know

 that

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that there is such a flower of Paradise, such an angel, living near you if you don't wish to know it. And I can assure you that Beatrice has the greatest respect for you, and if you will only be so good and so kind as to let us make each other happy she will be quite proud and glad to serve you as well as I do, and to help me to serve you too. And, sir, you know how fond you are of a fritto? Ah well, Beatrice can make a *rigaglie* so beautiful that you will say it must have come straight from Heaven; and this I know because I have tried it myself."

He flung himself down on the ground and kissed my hands, and kissed my feet, and wept, and made me an awful scene.

I told him to get up and not be a young fool. I said that I didn't care what he did, and asked if I had ever been a brute to him, or denied him anything that was reasonable.

He swore that I was a saint, a saint from Heaven, that I always had been and always should be, because I could not help myself; and was going down on his knees again, when I stopped that, and said he had better bring me the girl and not make me hotter than I was with his noise.

"To tell you the truth, sir," he replied, "I was always quite sure that you would have pity upon us when you knew how very much we loved each other. And when you caught us last night I told Beatrice that now I must let you know everything, because I was certain that as long as I did not deceive you (and you know that I have never done so) there was nothing to be afraid of; and I told her you would without doubt like to see her to give her good counsel, because she was my friend; and she said she would call that too much honour. Then I felt her trembling against my heart, so I kissed her for a long time and said she must be brave like I am; and, sir, as you are so gracious as to want to see her, I have taken the liberty of bringing her and she is here."

I had

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I had always admired the cleverness of this lad, and was not much surprised at his last announcement.

"Where?" I said.

"I put her behind that tree, sir," and he pointed to a big oak about twenty yards away. I could not help laughing at his deepness; and he took courage, I suppose, from my auspicious aspect. All sorts of clouds of hesitation, uncertainty and doubt moved out of his clear brown eyes, while his face set in a smile absurd and complacently expectant. "Shall I fetch her, sir?"

I nodded. I had had some experience of his amours before; but this was a new phase, and I thought I might as well be prepared for *anything*. He went a few paces away, and disappeared behind the oak tree. There was a little rustle of the underwood, and some kissing for a minute or two. Then he came out again, leading his companion by the hand. I said I was prepared for anything, but I confess to a little gasp at what I saw. It was not a boy and girl who approached me, but a couple of boys—apparently, at least. They came and stood beside the hammock in which I was lying. Toto, you know, was sixteen years old, a splendid, wild (*discolo*) creature, from the Abruzzi, a figure like Cellini's Perseus; skin brown, with real red blood under it; smooth as a peach, and noble as a god. He had a weakness for sticking a dead-white rose in the black waves of hair over his left ear, and the colour of that rose against his cheeks, flushed as they were now, was something to be truly thankful for. I used to make him wear white clothes on these hot summer days down by the lake—a silk shirt with all the buttons undone and the sleeves rolled up, showing his broad brown chest and supple arms, and short breeches of the same, convenient for rowing. (He had half-a-dozen creatures like himself under his command, and their business was to carry my photographic and insect-hunting apparatus,

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apparatus, and to wait upon me while I loafed the summers away in the Alban hills or along the eastern coast.) The seeming boy, whom he had called Beatrice, looked about fourteen years old, and far more delicately dainty even than he was. The bold magnificent independence of his carriage was replaced in her by one of tenderness and softness, quite as striking in its way as the other. She wore her hair in a short silky mop like Toto, and her shirt was buttoned up to the spring of her pretty throat. She was about as high as her boy's shoulder, and stood waiting before me with her poor little knees trembling, and a rosy blush coming and going over her face. They were so exquisitely lovely, in that sun-flecked shade with the blue lake for a background, that I could not help keeping them waiting a few minutes. Such pictures as this are not to be seen every day. Presently he put his arm round her neck, and she put hers round his waist, and leaned against him a little. But he never took his eyes off mine.

"Go on, Toto," I said, "what were you going to say?"

"Ah, well, sir, you see I thought if Beatrice came to live with us—with me, I mean—it would be more convenient for you if she looked like the rest of us, because then she would be able to do things for you as well as we can, and people will not talk."

It struck me immediately that Toto was right again as usual; for, upon my word, this girl of his would pass anywhere for a very pretty boy, with just the plump roundness of the Florentine Apollino, and no more.

"So I got some clean clothes of Guido's, and brought them here early this morning, and then I fetched Beatrice and put them on her, and hid her behind the tree, because I knew you would scold me about her when you came down to read your newspapers; and

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and I determined to tell you everything, and to let you know that the happiness of both of us was in your hands. And I only wanted you to see her like this, in order that you might know that you will not be put to any discomfort or inconvenience if you are so kind as to allow us to love each other."

This looked right enough; but, whether or not, there was no good in being nasty-tempered just then, so I told them to be as happy as they liked, and that I would not interfere with them as long as they did not interfere with me. They both kissed my hands, and I kissed Beatrice on the forehead, and cheeks and lips, Toto looking on as proud as a peacock. And then I told him to take her away and send her home properly dressed, and return to me in half an hour.

I could see very well that all these happenings were natural enough, and that it was not a part I cared to play to be harsh or ridiculous, or to spoil an idyll so full of charm and newness. Besides, I have reason to know jolly well the futility of interfering between the male animal and his mate.

So when Toto came back I said nothing discouraging or *ennuyant* beyond reminding him that he ought to make quite sure of possessing an enduring love for this girl, a love which would make him proud to spend his life with and for her, and her only. I told him he was very young, which was no fault of his, and that if he would take my advice he would not be in a hurry about anything. He said that my words were the words of wisdom, and that he would obey me just as he would the Madonna del Portone in her crown of glory if she came down and told him things then and there; that he had known Beatrice since they had been babies together, and had always loved her far better than his sisters, and in a different way too, if I could only understand. Last night when he had held her in his arms he told her that he knew she wished him

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him well, and felt himself so strong and she so weak, looking so tender and so tempting, that all of a minute he desired her for his own, and to give somebody a *bastonata* of the finest for her, and to take her out of the clutches of that dirty mean old witch-cat of a mamma of hers who never gave her any pleasure, kept her shut up whenever there was a festa, and, Saints of Heaven! sometimes beat her simply because she envied her for being beautiful and delicate, and bright as a young primrose. "What a hag of a mamma it was to be cursed with, and what could the Madonna be thinking about to give such a *donnicciuola* of a mamma to his own *bellacuccia!* Not but what the Madonnina was sometimes inattentive, but then, of course, she had so many people to look after or she could not have given such a mamma to San Pietro as she did."

Here I saw a chance of changing the subject, and remarked that it would be nice to know what sort of a mamma the Madonna had given to San Pietro.

"Ah, well, sir, you must know that the mamma of San Pietro was the meanest woman that ever lived—scraping and saving all the days of her life, and keeping San Pietro and his two sisters (the nun and the other one, of whom I will tell you another time) for days together with nothing to eat except perhaps a few potato peelings and a cheese rind. As for acts of kindness and charity to her neighbours, I don't believe she knew what they were, though of course I am not certain; and whatever good San Pietro had in him he must have picked up somewhere else. As soon as he was old enough to work he became a fisherman, as you know, because when the Santissimo Salvatore wanted a Pope to govern the Church, He went down to the seaside and chose San Pietro, because He knew that as San Pietro was a fisherman he would be just the man to bear all kinds of hardships, and to catch people's

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people's souls and take them to Paradise, just as he had been used to catch fish and take them to the market. And so San Pietro went to Rome, and reigned there for many years. And at last the Pagans settled that all the Catholics had to be killed. And the Catholics thought that though they had no objection to being killed themselves it would be a pity to waste a good Pope like San Pietro, who had been chosen and given to them by the Lord God Himself. Therefore they persuaded San Pietro to run away on a night of the darkest, and to hide himself for a time in a lonely place outside the gates of the city. After he had gone a little way along the Via Appia—and the night was very dark—he saw a grey light on the road in front of him, and in the light there was the Santissimo Himself; and San Pietro was astonished, for His Majesty was walking towards Rome. And San Pietro said: 'O Master, where do you go?' And the Face of the Santissimo became very sad, and He said: 'I am going to Rome to be crucified again.' And then San Pietro knew it was not a noble thing that he was doing to run away on the sly like this, because a shepherd doesn't leave his sheep when wolves come—at least, no shepherd worth a *baiocco*.

"Then San Pietro turned round and went back himself to Rome, and was crucified with much joy between two posts in the Circus of Nero; but he would not be crucified like the Santissimo, because he wished to make amends for his weakness in trying to run away, and he begged and prayed to be crucified with his head where his feet ought to be. The Pagans said most certainly if he liked it that way, it was all the same to them. And so San Pietro made no more ado but simply went straight to Heaven. And, of course, when he got there his angel gave him a new cope and a tiara and his keys, and the Padre Eterno put him to look after the gate, which is a very great honour, but only his due,

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due, because he had been of such high rank when he lived in the world. Now after he had been there a little while his mamma also left the world, and was not allowed to come into Paradise, but because of her meanness she was sent to hell. San Pietro did not like this at all, and when some of the other saints chaffed him about it he used to grow angry. At last he went to the Padre Eterno, saying that it was by no means suitable that a man of his quality should be disgraced in this way; and the Padre Eterno, Who is so good, so full of pity, and of mercy that He would do anything to oblige you if it is for the health of your soul, said He was sorry for San Pietro and He quite understood his position. He suggested that perhaps the case of San Pietro's mamma had been decided hurriedly, and He ordered her Angel Guardian to bring the book in which had been written down all the deeds of her life, good or bad.

"'Now,' said the Padre Eterno, 'We will go carefully through this book and if We can find only one good deed that she has done We will add to that the merits of Our Son and of hers so that she may be delivered from eternal torments.'

"Then the Angel read out of the book, and it was found that in the whole of her life she had only done one good deed; for a poor starving beggar-woman had once asked her, for the love of God, to give her some food, and she had thrown her the top of an onion which she was peeling for her own supper.

"And the Padre Eterno instructed the Angel Guardian of San Pietro's mamma to take that onion-top and to go and hold it over the pit of hell, so that if by chance she should boil up with the other damned souls to the top of that stew, she might grasp the onion-top and by it be dragged up to Heaven.

"The Angel did as he was commanded and hovered in the air over the pit of hell holding out the onion-top in his hand, and the furnace

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furnace flamed, and the burning souls boiled and writhed like *pasta* in a copper pot, and presently San Pietro's mamma came up thrusting out her hands in anguish, and when she saw the onion-top she gripped it, for she was a very covetous woman, and the Angel began to rise into the air carrying her up towards Heaven.

"Now when the other damned souls saw that San Pietro's mamma was leaving them, they also desired to escape and they hung on to the skirts of her gown hoping to be delivered from their pain, and still the Angel rose, and San Pietro's mamma held the onion-top, and many tortured souls hung on to her skirts, and others to the feet of those, and again others on to them, and you would surely have thought that hell was going to be emptied straight away. And still the Angel rose higher and the long stream of people all hanging to the onion-top rose too, nor was the onion-top too weak to bear the strain. But when San Pietro's mamma became aware of what was going on and of the numbers who were escaping from hell along with her, she didn't like it: and, because she was a nasty selfish and cantankerous woman, she kicked and struggled, and took the onion-top in her teeth so that she might use her hands to beat off those who were hanging to her skirts. And she fought so violently that she bit through the onion-top, and tumbled back for always into hell flame.

"So you see, sir, that it is sure to be to your own advantage if you are kind to other people and let them have their own way so long as they don't interfere with you."

I chuckled at Toto's moral reflections.

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A Reading from Herrick

By Celia A. Levetus

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Mary Astell

By Mrs. J. E. H. Gordon

SHELLEY's mother-in-law, the famous Mary Wollstonecraft, vindicated the rights of women in a powerful and somewhat disagreeable book, which was published in 1792. For many years she has been believed to be the first pioneer of the higher education of women, and the first wailer over their wrongs, of any power and distinction; but Mary Wollstonecraft, though she possessed many merits as a writer, was herself too much absorbed by her own private matrimonial troubles to make her a competent judge of the wrongs of other women.

A century before Mary Wollstonecraft there lived another Mary whose surname was Astell, who never married, and who, as far as we can gather from her writings, had no private grievances of her own to ventilate in print, and therefore her arguments have a special value. Two centuries ago this remarkable woman strove to rouse the consciences of her sister women, and tried lustily to make them take up a healthier attitude of mind towards the opposite sex.

Mary Astell was born at Newcastle, and the appreciative Ballard in his memoir records of her,* "that she had a piercing wit, a solid judgment,

* "Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain who have been celebrated for their writings, or skill in the Learned Languages, Arts, and Sciences." George Ballard: Oxford, 1752.

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judgment, and a tenacious memory, so that she could make herself complete mistress of anything she attempted to learn with the greatest ease imaginable."

An uncle undertook her education, and she appears to have studied philosophy, mathematics, logic, and French. She was not a Latin or a Greek scholar, nevertheless she states in one of her publications that her "favourite heathen authors were Xenophon, Plato, Tully, Seneca, Epictetus, Heraclitus, and Marcus Antoninus." So, taking into consideration the times in which she lived, she must have been a learned lady, even though she was only able to study the classics in translations.

When she was twenty years old she came to live in Chelsea, and supported herself by writing theological tracts of an exceedingly orthodox character, which are all of them very dejecting reading, though occasionally a vigorous phrase or an apt adjective brightens their dreary controversial pages. But in 1694 Dame Astell published anonymously a queer little brown volume of quite another order of merit. This little seventeenth century bomb-shell was entitled "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest, By A Lover of Her Sex."

This volume deserves to be rescued from oblivion, not only for its own intrinsic merit, but because there is little doubt that Daniel Defoe (the first male advocate for the better education of women) derived many of his ideas upon the training of girls from its authoress, and though he differed from her conclusions on some few material points, yet he cannot be credited with originating all the reformatory schemes set forth in his "Essay on Projects." I think it is not too much to say that "The Serious Proposal to the Ladies" contains the embryo of the ideas which were developed and expanded by a later generation into Newnham, Girton, and all the other ladies' colleges. A considerable portion of

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of the book is taken up with long religious dissertations, such as were appreciated by the women of the times in which, and for which, they were written; but shorn of the conventional sententiousness suitable for that period, Mary Astell's ideas will be found to be so much in advance of her age, that it is not difficult to understand why her drastic wit and uncompromising candour scandalised the bishops and clergy of her day, and made for her many enemies among her own sex, whose foibles and frivolities she so sarcastically derided. This stringent dame was of opinion that "Women value men too much and themselves too little—and that they should be capable of nobler things than the pitiful conquest of some worthless heart." She thinks that, "Were men as much neglected, and as little care taken to cultivate and improve them as is spent upon women, they would sink into the greatest stupidity and brutality," and that ladies "who have comely bodies should not tarnish their glory with deformed souls." She pleads eloquently for a better education for their minds, and implores them not to be content "to be in the world like tulips in a garden, to make a fine show and be good for nothing."

The pages of this quaint little book abound in sprightly sayings, but the pith of her "Serious Proposal" was, that a Monastery (*sic*) should be erected, and so organised that it should fit women, by education and discipline, to do the greatest good in the world that their natures and characters were capable of. The establishment was to be conducted upon the principles of the Church of England, *but* the religious education was to be supplemented by sound mental instruction. One can imagine what a startling proposition this must have been to the gay ladies of the seventeenth century, and one smiles to think how they must have cackled and argued over this audacious proposal.

Dr. Karl Bulbring in an article contributed to the *Journal of*

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of Education upon Mary Astell and her influence over Defoe,* points out that Defoe writes of this book by the title of "Advice to the Ladies," and that he asserts in the Preface to his "Essay on Projects" that he was not influenced in any way by Mary Astell's ideas upon education. I have carefully read over Defoe's essays and compared them with the "Serious Proposal," and I feel sure that any fair-minded person who has examined these two books (as well as Defoe's and Mary Astell's respective writings upon the lives and characters of the country gentleman of those times) must acknowledge the remarkable resemblance of their ideas, and methods of expressing them. But Mary Astell's "Serious Proposal" was published three years before the famous "Essays on Projects," and therefore it is difficult to give whole-hearted credence to Defoe's assertion, that his ideas were formed long before Mary Astell's were made public. But whatever controversy the curious may like to engage in as to the priority of these ideas, it is at any rate a remarkable fact that a woman writer in those days should have attracted the notice of a man like Defoe, and that he should have condescended to review her schemes in his book. Though the accordance of many of his ideas with those of Mary Astell is so apparent and so remarkable, there was yet one prominent point in the ladies' "Proposal" of which the gentleman could not, and did not approve, for with regard to the monastery for "Religious Retirement and Mental instruction," Defoe observes:

"Saving my respect to the sex, the levity which perhaps is a little peculiar to them (at least in their youth) will not bear the restraint; and I am satisfied nothing but the height of bigotry can keep up a nunnery. Women are extravagantly desirous of going to heaven, and will

* *Journal of Education*, April 1, 1891.

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will punish their pretty bodies to get thither ; but nothing else will do it, and even in that case sometimes it falls out that nature will prevail. When I talk therefore of an Academy for Women, I mean both the model, the teaching, and the government different from that which is proposed by that ingenious lady, for whose proposal I have a very great esteem, and also a great opinion of her wit ; different too from all sorts of religious confinement, and above all from vows of celebacy."

Ballard in his Memoirs relates that Mary Astell's scheme for an educational monastery for ladies, although it was first received with approval by some influential persons, was yet ultimately frustrated through the influence of Bishop Burnet. "A certain great lady" promised the sum of £10,000 towards carrying out this proposal, but was dissuaded from her intentions by the aforesaid bishop.

Poor Dame Astell seems to have excited the enmity of all the clergy of those times, for it is recorded that she was preached against from many pulpits ; and Dr. Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, wrote in a letter to Dr. Smallridge concerning her :

"had she as much good breeding as good sense she would be perfect, but she has not the most decent manner of insinuating what she means, but is now and then a little offensive and shocking in her expressions, which I wonder at, because a civil turn of words is what her sex it always mistress of. She is, I think, wanting in it."

In 1697 Mary Astell published the second part of the "Serious Proposal to the Ladies, wherein a Method is offered for the Improvements of their Minds." This book, in spite of a few stalwart paragraphs, is not so engaging as its predecessor. The second appeal met with no more response than the first had done.

It is difficult to discover any materials for writing a biography of Mary Astell, for with the exception of a few allusions to her schemes

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schemes in contemporary writings and the "Memoirs of Ballard," from which I have already quoted, nothing more is known of her except what we can deduce ourselves from her vigorous little books.

The "Dictionary of National Biography" gives only a short summary of Mary Astell and her writings. The article in the second volume was, I believe, contributed by Canon Overton, who does not even mention another very remarkable book published by her in 1697, which appeared anonymously under the title "An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex," in which Mary Astell discusses the position and education of women, and protests against their subjection to men. Dr. Karl Bulbring, in the article from which I have already quoted, records that two editions of this book were issued in the first year, and the third in 1697. The title-page states that the book is dedicated to Princess Anne of Denmark, who, according to the remarks at the end of the volume, caused her to write the Essay. The astute Dr. Bulbring (to whom, I believe, must be accorded the credit for practically re-discovering Mary Astell) points out that this volume, as well as the more famous "Proposal," appeared before the publication of Defoe's essays, and before the publication of his "Compleat English Gentleman."

Being much interested in Mary Astell and her influence over the author of "Robinson Crusoe," I have not only read all her works and compared them with Defoe's in the British Museum, but I have (by patient advertising and searching of booksellers' catalogues) acquired possession of all her books myself. They are delectable reading, and have acquired a place of honour in my cherished library as much for their own value as for their historical interest.

"The Defence of the Female Sex" is even more entertaining reading than her former volume. In it she naïvely enquires,

"Whether

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"Whether the time an Ingenious Gentleman spends in the Company of Women may justly be said to be misemployed or not?"

She then proceeds to point out most insinuatingly the great advantages that the ingenious gentleman would secure by providing himself with a better educated helpmate, and the profit that would be derived by the nation at large by teaching women arithmetic and other arts which require not much bodily strength, so that lusty men could be sent whither hands and strength are more required.

She remarks on page 19 of this same book:

"I know our Oposers usually miscall our quickness of Thought, Fancy, and Flash, and christen their own heaviness by the specious Names of Judgement and Solidity; but is easie to retort upon 'em the reproachful Ones of Dullness and Stupidity with more Justice."

Mary Astell was not only very advanced in her views about women's education, but I think she must also have been an advocate, more or less, of the now called "modern side" education of boys, for she says on page 27 of this same book that:

"Scholars, though by their acquaintance with Books and Conversing much with Old Authors yet lose their way at home in their own parish. They are mighty admirers of the Wit and Eloquence of the Ancients; yet, had they lived in the time of Cicero and Cæsar, would have treated them with as much supercilious Pride and disrespect as they do now with reverence. They are great hunters of ancient Manuscripts, and have in great Veneration anything that has scap'd the Teeth of Time and Rats, and if Age have obliterated the Characters, 'tis the more valuable for not being legible. But if by chance they can pick out one Word, they rate it higher than the whole Author in Print, and wou'd give more for one Proverb of Solomon's, under his own hand, then for all his Wisdom. These

 superstitious,

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superstitious, bigotted Idolaters of time past, are Children in their understanding all their lives; for they hang so incessantly upon the leading Strings of Authority, that their Judgements like the Limbs of some Indian Penitents, become altogether crampt and motionless for want of use."

On page 37 of these same Essays, the discriminating lady remarks that for conversational purposes it is

"not requisite we should be Philologers, Rhetoricians, Philosophers, Historians or Poets; but only that we should think pertinently, and express our thoughts properly on such matters as are the proper subjects for a mixed conversation."

She considers that pleasant conversation between the sexes should turn upon lively topics—love, honour, gallantry, morality, news, raillery, and a numberless train of other things, copious and diverting. Religion, she argues, is too tender a subject; business too dry and barren; points of learning too profound; and abstruse speculations and nice politics too argumentative to awaken the good humour or raise the mirth of the company.

After summing up the many interesting subjects there are that women can study, she remarks that:

"nothing but discouragement or an Idle Uncurious Humour can hinder us from Rivalling most Men in the Knowledge of great Variety of Things without the help of more Tongues than our Own; which the Men so often reproachfully tell us is enough."

Mary Astell must have been somewhat of a Socialist as well as an advocate for the better education of her own sex, for she devotes several scathing pages to describing the country gentry of her times, who

"for eight or nine years are whipt up and down through two or three counties, from School to School, when, being arriv'd at sixteen or

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or seventeen years of age, and having made the usual Tour of Latin and Greek Authors, they are call'd home to be made Gentlemen."

Her description of the after careers of these so-called gentlemen is withering, and must have been rather unpleasant reading for her male acquaintances.

Mary Astell has been somewhat fortunate in finding an illustrator with some sense of humour, who has contributed a frontispiece to her book, depicting "The Compleat Beau" admiring himself in his looking-glass, and dextrously applying a patch to his chin, while an anxious-faced barber powders his wig at the back. Below the engraving these lines are printed:

"This vain gay thing sets up for man,
But see wt fate attends him
The powdering Barber first began,
The Barber Surgeon ends him."

It was hardly to be expected that a pioneer lady (of even the seventeenth century) should be content to leave the marriage problem alone, and therefore it is not surprising to find that Mary Astell, like many women of the present day, rushed into print to give the world as forcibly as she dared her ideas upon this subject. In 1700 she published a fiery little volume entitled, "Some Reflections upon Marriage," which was republished in 1705 and 1706, and as it attained three editions it must have attracted considerable attention. Therein, she endeavours to point out that one of the principal reasons of unhappiness in married life is the want of solid education upon the part of the wife, and also that a woman is forced to marry from the custom of the world, and to be preserver of the family. "A woman," she remarks, "can't properly be said to choose; all that is allowed her is to refuse or accept what is offered."

With

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With regard to the choice of the man, the acid-minded lady remarks :

"there is no great odds between Marrying for Love of Money, or for the Love of Beauty ; a man does not act according to reason in either case, but is govern'd by Irregular Appetites. But he loves her Wit perhaps, and this you will say is more spiritual, more refin'd ; not at all, if you examine it to the Bottom for what is that which now a days passes under the name of Wit ? A bitter and illnatured Raillery, a pert Repartée, or a confident talking at all. It is not improbable that such a Husband may in a little time by ill usage provoke such a wife to exercise her Wit, that is her Spleen, upon him, and then it is not hard to guess how very agreeable it will be for him."

Mary Astell devotes several pages to pointing out how many unhappy matings arise by reason of the false notions in which women are educated, and most of her able arguments would apply equally forcibly to the average pre-matrimonial education of the present day.

The little old copy of "Some Reflections upon Marriage," which is in my possession, has evidently been read with much dissent by one Mr. Robert Grace, upon whom the book had been bestowed by a lady friend of the name of Mrs. Eversfeild. He records his robust male objections in various marginal notes, question, and exclamation marks, and on one page (where the authoress insists very strongly upon the necessity of women rousing their understanding and opening their eyes, that they may distinguish between truth and appearances), the indignant Mr. Robert Grace breaks into verse, and pens along the margin the following lines :

Give me a wife with countenance full smiling,
With gentle courtesy and temper willing,
Whose speech unmix't with gall shews her whole heart.
Then will I say "My Wife my Love thou art !"

Mr. Robert Grace,

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Mr. Robert Grace, it is to be hoped, was better qualified to be a husband than he was to be a poet !

Later on in the same volume Mary Astell evidently becomes frightened of her own dawning opinions, her relations had perhaps been worrying her about them, and many candid friends had been telling her, how pernicious and foolish her schemes were, for on page 58 she draws in her argumentative horns, and says :

"How can a woman scruple intire subjection, how can she forbear to admire the worth and excellence of the Superior Sex, if she at all considers it ? Have not all the great Actions that have been perform'd in the World been done by Men ? Have they not founded Empires and overturn'd them ? Do not they make Laws, and continually repeal and amend them ? Their vast minds lay kingdoms waste, no bounds or measures can be prescrib'd to their desires. What is it that they cannot do ? They make Worlds and ruine them. Form systems of universal Nature, and dispute eternally about them. She then who Marries ought to lay it down for an indisputable Maxim that her husband must govern absolutely and intirely, and that she has nothing else to do, but to Please and Obey. She must not attempt to divide his Authority, or so much as dispute it to struggle with her yoke will only make it gall the more, but must believe him Wise and Good, and in all respects the Best, at least he must be so to her. She who can't do this is in no way fit to be a wife."

She continues this kind of dissertation for several pages more, but the discriminating reader will not fail to notice that in this honeyed sop thrown to the male Cerebus, there is a good deal of hidden satire, and the culmination of all her argument is :—Pray educate us women a little better that we may be the more capable of adequately admiring you men, which argument shows that there was a good deal of Mother Eve in this ancestor of ours. But in spite of the clerical and feminine influence brought to bear on her,

Mary Astell's

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Mary Astell's robustness of character occasionally breaks free of their shackles, and towards the end of the volume she exclaims :

"A Woman should always remember that she has no mighty obligation to the man who makes love to her; she has no reason to be fond of being a wife, or to reckon it a piece of preferment when she is taken to be a man's upper servant. . . . If a woman were duly taught to know the world, especially the true sentiments that men have of her, and the Traps they lay for her under so many gilded compliments—women would marry more discreetly and demean themselves better in a married state than some people say they do. A woman would then duly examine and weigh all the circumstances, the good and evil of the marriage state, and not be surprised with unforseen inconveniences, and either never consent to be a wife, or make a good one when she does it."

In a preface to the third edition she becomes even more courageous, and bravely asks :

"To whom do we poor Fatherless Maids and Widows who have lost their Masters owe subjection? It can't be to all Men in general, unless all Men are agreed to give the same commands; do we then fall as Strays to the first who finds us? from the Maxims of some Men, and the Conduct of some Women, one wou'd think so."

I have now given extracts from Mary Astell's three most remarkable volumes, to wit, "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies," "An Essay in Defence of her Sex," and "Some Reflections upon Marriage;" and only wish that I had space wherein to quote more of her wise, witty, and sarcastic sayings. Tenderness was a quality that Mary Astell evidently did not possess.

Ballard tells us in his Memoirs that she had a very sincere friendship with Lady Elizabeth Hastings, who he relates gave her as much as four score guineas at one time. During the time she lived

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lived in Chelsea she much resented her studies being interrupted by gossiping visitors, and when she accidentally saw needless callers coming, who she knew to be incapable of discoursing on any useful subject, but come for the sake of chat and tattle, she would look out of the window and jestingly tell them, "Mrs. Astell is not at home."

The end of her life was a very sad one, and she proved that her physical must have been as great as her moral bravery. For many months she concealed a terrible cancer in the breast. In the hopes that an operation might be successful, she went privately to a physician, and (remembering that chloroform was not known in those days) we cannot but admire her fortitude when we read that she "refused to have her hands held, and did not discover the least timidity or impatience, but went through the operation without the least struggling or resistance, or even so much as giving a groan or a sigh." But in spite of her stoical courage, she subsequently endured some years of suffering which she bore with the greatest fortitude, and died in 1731 at the age of sixty-three.

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Rideo

By R. V. Risley

On the slope of a little hill, overlooking a quaint old town in Provence, there is an ancient cloistered monastery, surrounded by gardens. The buildings, soft-coloured in their red tiles and creamy stucco, have lain for centuries asleep upon the vineyarded hillside; they are ancient and cracked with the sun, and their gardens are as old as they. In these gardens, which are enclosed by a high white wall, from the gate of which one can look down over the roofs of the village, and see the tower of the little church, calm-faced priests pace in reverie through the long summer afternoons, while the rose leaves fall silently, and the ancient poplars turn up their silvery leaves.

The whole place seems asleep. There is a feeling of being haunted, in the old gardens; and sitting on the smooth stone benches one drowses back into memories. Through the long day the silence is broken only by the faint sound of the bell of the little church, or by the occasional bleating of sheep in the distance.

Some of the priests are young, some are very old. And among these latter is one who sits apart on a great stone seat, under a huge knarled rose tree; sometimes he is found making rude toys for children, with his delicate white hands; sometimes he sits idly, raising his head once or twice during the afternoon, and gazing

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gazing out through the gateway over the roofs of the village; he never has gone outside since he first came to the monastery, and the others touch their foreheads when they speak of him, and say, "We do not understand."

This is the tale of his coming. Why he told it to me I do not know; I have thought sometimes it was because he felt the dim need of one outside the monastery, some one who came from the world.

"What man is I do not know; I think nobody knows. We have no standard, no comparison; we are too near to ourselves, I think that we are nearer to nature than most of us believe, though why that should make us further from God, as many say, I do not see. We can only wonder how these things are; how can we expect to do otherwise?

"I was born in the village here. My father was the owner of many vineyards, and had been a student in his youth. I was brought up for the priesthood. I studied at Avignon with an old curé. I entered the Church, and was sent to be priest here.

"I lived in a little house with a garden, at the edge of the village; you cannot see it, it is under the hill. In the early morning I would go to the church, then afterwards I would come home to my coffee. Till noon I would sit in my garden and read. In the afternoon I would read, or go to the church, or visit the townsfolk. In the evening, when there was no service, I would sit in my study and pass the hours until bed-time in work, or in conversation with whoever came to see me. It is about myself, pardon then, that I mention it so often. A quiet life, with little of amusement or excitement in it; yet a peaceful one, with few cares, and much time for study. So the years went on, until I was forty years old.

"Perhaps

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"Perhaps you from the world will understand these things, my friends who have passed their lives in the monastery do not."

The old man waved a rose-leaf from the back of his hand, where it had fallen, and glanced kindly at two young brothers of the order who were pacing slowly, with bowed heads and thoughtful faces, down one of the side paths.

"An old man," he continued, turning again to me, "has but one tale worth telling. Hates and successes, failures or honours come to seem small as the shadow of his end grows larger; only kindness stays. I hope," and his voice grew reverent, "that you, from the places that are so far away, will find my meaning. I say this because the story seems angry."

Then raising his head, he told me in a low voice, most straightforwardly, this that follows. Occasionally a priest would pass by and glance at us where we sat, under the shade of the old rose-tree, or sometimes a bird would twitter in the branches somewhere near us. Otherwise there was silence.

"It was when I was forty years old, one morning as I passed down the high street. It was sunny, and the freshness of the open air seemed strange to me, for I had been up all night at my studies. A face looked out at me from the open window of one of the houses, as I passed. Along the window ledge stood a row of little rose-trees in full blossom, and the face that smiled at me from over their branches was half-shadowed by a wide-brimmed hat. Now this was a pretty picture, that I had seen before—Pierre the farmer's daughter watering her roses of a morning. Yet when I had bowed and smiled, and was walking on down the street, the face, and especially the laughter of the eyes, stayed with me. For three days I did not see the face again.

"Then, walking in the afternoon to see some of the townsfolk, I met the daughter of Pierre the farmer again. She had a large basket

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basket of green things; with other people I would have stopped and spoken, and if I had walked with them, carried their basket. I bowed, smiled as one whose thoughts are far away, and passed on.

"That night I quarrelled with Aquinus, drank three cups of coffee, which kept me awake, and was cross all the next day—till evening; then as I came down the steps of the church, she and her father passed by. That evening after I had reached my garden gate, I turned, and instead of going to my books, went down the street again to a neighbour's, where I stayed till late and talked much. The next morning I took a walk in the fields; when it came to an hour before noon, at which time I knew she would be in the market, I went across to where I saw some mowers in the distance, and sat with them till the market was over. Then I went back to the town; and met her by accident, just in front of my own door; I bowed crossly and went in.

"That night after my dinner, I sat down to my books in my study, with my cup of black coffee by my side on the desk. I opened a book of philosophy, then going to the shelves, I took down some rolls of manuscript, on which I was working, and spread them out by the side of the books and the coffee. Then I settled myself down to work. I had a splendid evening; my brain was firm and clear; my thoughts came rapidly, and a fluency of expression followed them that surprised myself. I worked till eleven o'clock, then I laid aside my books; I sat awhile in my chair. After a short time I dreamily gathered up my manuscripts and carried them towards the shelf. As I lifted them to their place, my eyes fell upon the black sleeve of my cassock. I turned uncertainly, and walked towards the open fire; hesitating, I slowly threw them into the flames one by one. I watched them burn. Then I went back to my chair and sat down; my housekeeper found me there when she came to dust my books in the morning.

"For

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"For two weeks I saw her face in church; at the end of that time I went to her father, and offered to teach her Latin. The next morning she came to my house, and took possession of a great arm-chair in my study, and our lessons began. Yes, it was weak. But we have more possibilities in our natures than we think for; I do not know.

"Sometimes I would sit after she was gone, with my head in my hands, dejectedly, and my very spirit would seem broken within me. I, the priest! At other times I would pace my study, my hands clenched behind my back, my head sunk on my chest.

"Can I ever forget the morning when I tried to go away! It was after our lesson was over, I was bundling my papers on my desk. I said suddenly, 'I am going away!' Her eyes grew serious in a moment, and her mouth drooped a little.

"I turned my head. 'I am going away,' I said again, not looking at her. I heard her feet slip to the floor as she got down from the great chair, on the arm of which she had been sitting. Coming behind me, she put her hand timidly on my shoulder, and said, sadly, 'I'm so sorry, I was enjoying the lessons so much!'

"That night I lay awake, tormenting myself with doubts, and striving for courage to overcome the excuses that thronged to my bidding, why I should not go on the morrow. All night I lay and struggled with it, and when the night was over at last, I was still uncertain.

"But when in the fresh morning, I, sitting pale at my books, heard her light feet come dancing up the gravelled walk, and when her laughing voice, breathless for haste, greeted me with its happy good-morning, followed on the instant by the anxious question, 'If I were going to-day, and for how long?'—well, I turned to her

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her with a smile. 'Going to-day? No. It was only a notion; I will tell you before I go.'

"I think it was three days after this that I first noticed Jean. It was in the afternoon, and I was sitting alone in my garden with the gate open, a thing I often did now, for sometimes she would pass by, and seeing me sitting there, come in for a moment. Sitting that afternoon, suddenly I saw her on the other side of the shady road, walking past with a young farmer; he was the son of a neighbour, and an honest straightforward fellow.

"'She would not have passed by with him if she cared for him!' I argued to myself, wiping the sweat from my forehead. Then a little demon would whisper, 'Why?' and then I would wipe the sweat from my forehead again. The next day I did not speak to her about it, nor the next; and after a few weeks the pain grew more distant, and things went on as before.

"At the end of that time she told me in the middle of the lesson, that she and Jean would marry when autumn came—then she laughed shyly.

"I gave her some good advice, and after a few minutes made her return to the lesson. It was a verb we were learning, 'rideo.'

"That night when all were asleep, I walked in my study. Around me rose the faces of my old books that had become stranger-like. On the desk lay scattered the sheets of paper of our work that morning; in the corner her big chair. All this by the light of the great brass lamp hung overhead.

"'Good God,' I said aloud, 'is a priest not still a man? Do not the ties of human kind apply to him? If Thou art love, or kindness, or anything of good, why is it that the service of Thee should make me desolate of all the best of humanity? I am a priest—a priest—yet more than a priest, a man! Is there anything but man in the world? Is not man sufficient unto himself?

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himself? The universe is but the reflection of what is behind his eyes. If this thing is the work of Thy hands, oh, God, how can it be evil? And if Thou doest unkindness, or evil, knowing all things, then our worship of Thee is devil-worship, not the worship of God!'

"Thus I stood in my agony and argued with God.

"'But,' said I again, my hands thrust in my robe, 'if I were a man and not priest, what have I to do with her? What do I know of laughter—I the studious priest! I am a bowed old, book-killed man, twice her age. I have nothing to do with laughter! Circumstance, digger of graves to humanity.'

"I fell on my knees, and lifted my hands in the glare of the lamp-light, I spoke to God.

"'I am a priest, Thy priest. I am a man, Thy man. Yes, I am an old man. Take me away. What have I left in life? Why should I remain? What is Thy will?'

"My arms sank to my sides; I waited. Then as I waited my eyes rested on the paper-strewn table, and out of the disorder a word in her hand-writing took shape, the word 'rideo,' written on an old exercise sheet. I got up from my knees, and leaving the lamp burning went out of the room, shutting the door behind me.

"The next morning when I came down, a little late, to the lesson, for I had over-slept, Jean was sitting on a small stool, where his big bulk looked extremely ridiculous, gazing devotedly at his sweet-heart in her usual place, knitting her brows over a difficult piece of Latin.

"'Good-morning,' I said grimly, 'has he also come to study Latin?'

"She jumped out of her chair. 'No, of course not! I brought him here to receive your blessing, father. And then afterwards I thought,

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thought, if he might stay—I promise he won't be a bit of trouble—and hear me recite.'

"The great bulk precipitated itself on to its knees, at this point, and she taking it for granted that I consented, arranged herself beside it. So I raised my hands and extended them over them, and said, sanctimoniously, 'Bless you—bless you, my children!'

"Then she rose and the bulk erected itself, establishing itself in a comfortable chair, at my invitation, and we began the lesson. That is, we began after she had whispered to him. 'The father is so funny this morning!'

"After this I used to have this pleasant surprise often. Jean would appear to hear her recite—his supervision of her studies was really quite husbandly.

"One morning I was the appreciative listener to a long account of a certain wedding-dress. That night I had a hard struggle to keep to my new lesson of the word. But I conquered at last, and was able to smile as grimly as ever in the morning.

"I think my sermons at this time must have contained some curious theology. I seemed to be possessed by a devil of satire, that never rested from thrusting shafts of the finest ridicule at all religious things. I found matter of ridicule in every sentence of the church-service, and used sometimes to laugh when I was alone at some sacrilegious thought that would come to me. And this tinged my conversation, I know; people who had stopped to speak with me in the street, would turn and look after me when I had gone on. Sometimes I would burst out laughing at the most unlikely moments; at dinner when somebody was telling a serious story, or when alone, walking in my garden.

"I had not prayed, or had recourse to God in any way, since the night when I read the word. In this state I was pacing one

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one afternoon, up and down a path in my garden, chuckling to myself over some irreverent thought, when I saw my old housekeeper pass by, evidently in search of me. A whim brought it into my head to hide myself in the bushes, where I stood laughing, and in a moment here came by Jean—with her. They passed in front of the place where I was hidden, and my insane fit of laughter redoubled as I saw them go. Then having reached the end of the path, they turned back and came past again; this time I heard their words. Jean was speaking, and he was telling her how much he loved her; his quantities were rather vague, in the usual peasantlike style. And she would laugh—I remember—she would laugh and answer him softly. Then my laughter grew even more in its exquisite amusement, as they passed out of sight, and out of hearing. Again they returned, passing by me. They were still talking; this time about their house and how they would live, and again she answered him softly, seeming to take a pride in his very ignorance! This time my laughter was almost audible. Again they passed, talking of themselves, of their love, of their life. Again the inclination to laughter came, but the laughter died away in my throat; the cold sweat was running down my forehead, and I shook as I stood in the bushes.

"Again they passed. I could hear their words; I had never heard them speak so before. I held on to the bushes and groaned with merriment. Again I saw them coming; I could not stand it. I broke through the undergrowth, and, running between the trees, gained the house. I ran up the stairs, avoiding the study, and, rushing into my own room, threw myself on to the bed, and, like a child, stuffing the pillow into my mouth, burst into tears, through which would break spasmodic laughter, occasionally—I, a grown man and a priest!

"Well, the next day, coming down to the lesson, I was just as usual

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usual. Now, Jean seemed to have found a particular liking for me, or rather a particular interest in me—probably because of my having told him, one day, some stories of the torments of hell, which impressed him greatly.

"So he would come frequently to ask me questions about the growing of flowers, in which I had taken an interest.

"I never wrote now. My books on the shelves remained where they were. I took one of them down one day aimlessly; but it was my Aquinus—the one I used on that evening long ago, when I had burned my manuscript; looking at it, I grew so sad that I put it back on the shelf without reading it.

"I spent my days either sitting in my garden, or walking in the streets of the town or through the fields.

"The months slipped by, and it came time to give up the Latin lessons; she was busy at home. But Jean came frequently, to console me for her absence, I believe, and, probably with the same intention, told me, in his drawling voice, the details of the preparations and the plans for the ceremony.

"So the time went on, till it was the day before the wedding.

"I was down in the church, superintending its decorations of roses, when one of the farmers came to me, as I stood high upon a ladder, with a request that I would come to bless his fields on the morrow.

"'But,' I said, 'there is this wedding; I cannot do both; could I not come the next day?' But the farmer excused himself. He was going away on a journey the next day; I could do it late in the afternoon, after the wedding was over; it was such a magnificent crop, and would the good father be so kind? I consented. Yes, I would come to bless his fields—after the wedding was over. I do not understand how it was—I felt dull and incapable of sensation.

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"It was so the next day. I dimly remember having my coffee in the morning, and some time after my housekeeper bringing me my vestments nicely brushed. Then I remember going to the church, I remember putting on my robes in the little room behind the altar. Of the ceremony itself I can recollect little. There was a great cruel wall of faces between me and the far-away light of the open door. There was a figure in white, in which for some reason or other I felt an interest; and, also, there was a large figure, towards whom I felt dimly friendly. The organ sounded far away; the choir of children's voices joined in. Then I remember some words, and a short time afterwards the welcome sunlight of the open door, as I passed down the aisle of the deserted church. I went home and drank a cup of coffee, and sat pleasantly by the great front window, drumming on the table where my empty coffee-cup stood. After a while, the people for whom I was waiting appeared—the farmers to conduct me to the fields I was to bless. I got up, and, with one of them before me carrying the bag of my holy robes, I walked forth to bless the fields.

"As we went, I listened to their conversation—of horses, or dogs, and crops: then they began to talk of the wedding; they talked of how pretty she looked, and of Jean, and of how much land and stock his father owned. They all agreed that the marriage was most suitable.

"It was one of those still afternoons in the autumn, when the rife world seemed luxuriant, full of joy and growth. The faint blue sky was cloudless, and the fields of rippling corn shone in the afternoon sunlight.

"A great joyous stillness hung over the maternal earth; as we passed by, gaudy flowers of crimson or yellow nodded to us over the old fences, and by the sides of the winding road trivial weeds flaunted their many colours. The farmers, proud of the honour

of

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of escorting their priest, trod along a little in front, their heavy boots crushing the soft clods of earth in the road. Sometimes the shrill voice of a cricket would come from the field we were passing.

"After a time the journey ended; by the edge of the rise of a little hill stood the cottage of the farmer who led us. I was shown into the sitting-room and, with many bows of hospitality, left to put on my robes, while the farmers gathered, waiting about the door outside. On the chimney-piece were arranged flowers in vases and pots, the thought of the daughter of the house, whom I had confirmed. The attention touched me, and I went up and smelled of them. Then, taking the priest's robes out of the bag, I put them on, and, going to the doorway, called to the farmers that I was ready.

"Outside the door we formed in procession, the farmer whose fields I was to bless leading with a scythe, to cut away possible brambles. We passed through a place in the fence, and entered on the long swath that had been mown through the fields, to a slight elevation in their centre.

"Now, for the first time that day, I wakened. The scent of the newly cut corn seemed to get in my head, and the wide horizon-line of waving yellow made me angry. All the unreality of the day broke up and disappeared. The pain, the despair, the torture came back again, rushing. For a moment I thought the feeling would smother me; but its first intensity grew less after a little while, and I found myself walking mechanically through the lane of yellow, with the bare-headed farmers behind me. I looked abroad over the far-stretching fields, and the sight of their still joy tormented me. I shut my eyes and strove against the agony. Something repeating in my head, 'She is sitting at her marriage feast!—She is sitting at her marriage feast!'

"I opened my eyes and looked forth over the fields. Their happiness

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happiness seemed so to torment me. We were pacing stolidly on, and far in front went the figure of the farmer, bending sometimes to brush a thistle or tassel of corn out of the path.

"'Why,' I said to myself, 'should I be so sad, while this torturing corn is so joyous?' On either side rose the solid wall of straight stalks, surmounted by their full heads, that rustled and bent to our passage. Far away on the horizon the golden fields bent in platoons and squadrons as the breeze touched them. The whole weight of the misery of the past long months broke on me suddenly.

"I tried to laugh, I repeated to myself over and over again, the word 'rideo,' but the incessant voice in my head kept repeating, 'She is sitting at her marriage feast—she is sitting at her marriage feast!'

"'Why,' I said again to myself, in a whisper, 'should these fields be so joyous and I so sad?'

"The farmers thought I was murmuring prayers, and I heard their muttered 'Amens' behind me. I pressed my hands hard to my sides. We walked on, the sun was growing low in the West. Soon we had come to the edge of the little rise in the middle of the fields.

"As we mounted towards the cleared circle that had been mown on the summit for my reception, the agony at my heart died down, and a feeling of almost indifference came to me. But in a moment we stood looking out upon the wide-spread corn. The red sun was sinking, by its light the yellow was touched into the colour of flame on the horizon. I stood silent, while the farmers arranged themselves, kneeling behind me. Then slowly I advanced to the centre of the circle.

"The glory of the setting sun was reflected on my embroidered robes, and the fields shimmered below me in a great ocean of crimson

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crimson and gold. It was perfectly still. I raised my hands and looked into the fading glory in the West. And somehow the pain came back again, the longing and the agony, the sickness and the despair of soul. Raising my hands high in the air, with the kneeling peasants behind me, and the light of the dying sun reflected on my holy robes, I stood aloft, and I cursed the happy fields! I cursed their light and their planting, I cursed their content and their joy, I cursed the seed from which they had sprung, and I cursed their glory and their fruition. I cursed the light of the sun when it rose upon them in the morning, and I cursed the light of the sun when it shone upon them, when the dusk came. I cursed their sowing and their harvest, I cursed their stalks and their bearded heads. I cursed their growing and their increase, I cursed them through the dark hours of the night. I stood there tall in my holy robes, and I cursed the corn ear by ear!

"The sunset glowed and gathered in the West, and faded away, and I stood there tall in the twilight, cursing.

"Well, the farmers pulled me down at last, and carried me away through the fields. I do not remember how I came here. Only something of a rumbling waggon, and a wild creature who lay still on the straw in the bottom.

"That is all."

The old man ceased speaking, and his head sunk on his breast; then with a slight sigh he took up the child's toy he was making, and worked on it with his white old hands, looking ever out through the gate-way over the village.

"What do you see?" I asked.

"Her children," he answered. Then holding up the small wooden cart, nearly finished, "I am afraid they do not like them much, they are badly finished," he said smiling, "I never see them play with them before the other children."

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Night

By J. E. Southall

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The Fishermen

From the French of
Emile Verhaeren

By Alma Strettell

THE spot is flaked with mist, that fills,
Thickening into rolls more dank,
The thresholds and the window-sills,
And smokes on every bank.

The river stagnates, pestilent
With carrion by the current sent
This way and that—and yonder lies
The moon, just like a woman dead,
That they have smothered overhead,
Deep in the skies.

In a few boats alone there gleam
Lamps that light up and magnify
The backs, bent over stubbornly,
Of the old fishers of the stream,
Who since last evening, steadily,
—For God knows what night-fishery—
Have

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Have let their black nets downward slow
Into the silent water go,
The noisome water there below.

Down in the river's deeps, ill-fate
And black mischances breed and hatch,
Unseen of them, and lie in wait
As for their prey. And these they catch
With weary toil—believing still
That simple, honest work is best—
At night, beneath the shifting mist
Unkind and chill.

So hard and harsh, yon clock-towers tell,
With muffled hammers, like a knell,
The midnight hour.
From tower to tower
So hard and harsh the midnights chime,
The midnights harsh of autumn time,
The weary midnights bell.

The crew
Of fishers black have on their back
Nought save a nameless rag or two;
And their old hats distil withal,
And drop by drop let crumbling fall
Into their necks, the mist-flakes all.

The hamlets and their wretched huts
Are numb and drowsy, and all round
The willows too, and walnut trees,
'Gainst which the Easterly fierce breeze
Has waged its feud.

No

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No bayings from the forest sound,
No cry the empty midnight cuts—
The midnight space that grows imbrued
With damp breaths from the ashy ground

The fishers hail each other not—
Nor help—in their fraternal lot ;
Doing but that which must be done,
Each fishes for himself alone.
And this one gathers in his net,
Drawing it tighter yet,
His freight of petty misery ;
And that one drags up recklessly

Diseases from their slimy bed ;
While others still their meshes spread
Out to the sorrows that drift by
Threateningly nigh ;
And the last hauls aboard with force
The wreckage dark of his remorse.

The river, round its corners bending,
And with the dyke-heads intertwined,
Goes hence—since what times out of mind ?
Toward the far horizon wending
Of weariness unending.
Upon the banks, the skins of wet
Black ooze-heaps nightly poison sweat,
And the mists are their fleeces light
That curl up to the houses' height.

In

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In their dark boats, where nothing stirs,
Not even the red-flamed torch that blurs
With halos huge, as if of blood,
The thick felt of the mist's white hood,
Death with his silence seals the sere
Old fishermen of madness here.

The isolated, they abide
Deep in the mist—still side by side,
But seeing one another never;
Weary are both their arms—and yet
Their work their ruin doth beget.

Each for himself works desperately,
Knowing not what, without a thought,
Nor dreams nor schemes has he;
Long have they worked, for long, long years,
While every instant brings its fears;
Nor have they ever
Quitted the borders of their river,
Where 'mid the moonlit mists, they strain
To fish misfortune up amain.

If but in this their night they hailed each other,
And brothers' voices might console a brother!

But numb and sullen, on they go,
With heavy brows and backs bent low,
While their small lights beside them gleam,
Flickering feebly on the stream.

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Like blocks of shadow they are there,
Nor ever do their eyes divine
That far away beyond the mists
Acrid and spongy—there exists
A firmament where 'mid the night,
Attractive as a loadstone, bright
Prodigious planets shine.

The fishers black of that black plague
Are the immensely lost, among
The knells, the far-off distance vague,
The great beyond stretched out so long,
Further than any eye can see;
And the damp autumn midnight rains
Into their souls' monotony.

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Two Pictures

By C. M. Gere

I. Hermia and Helena

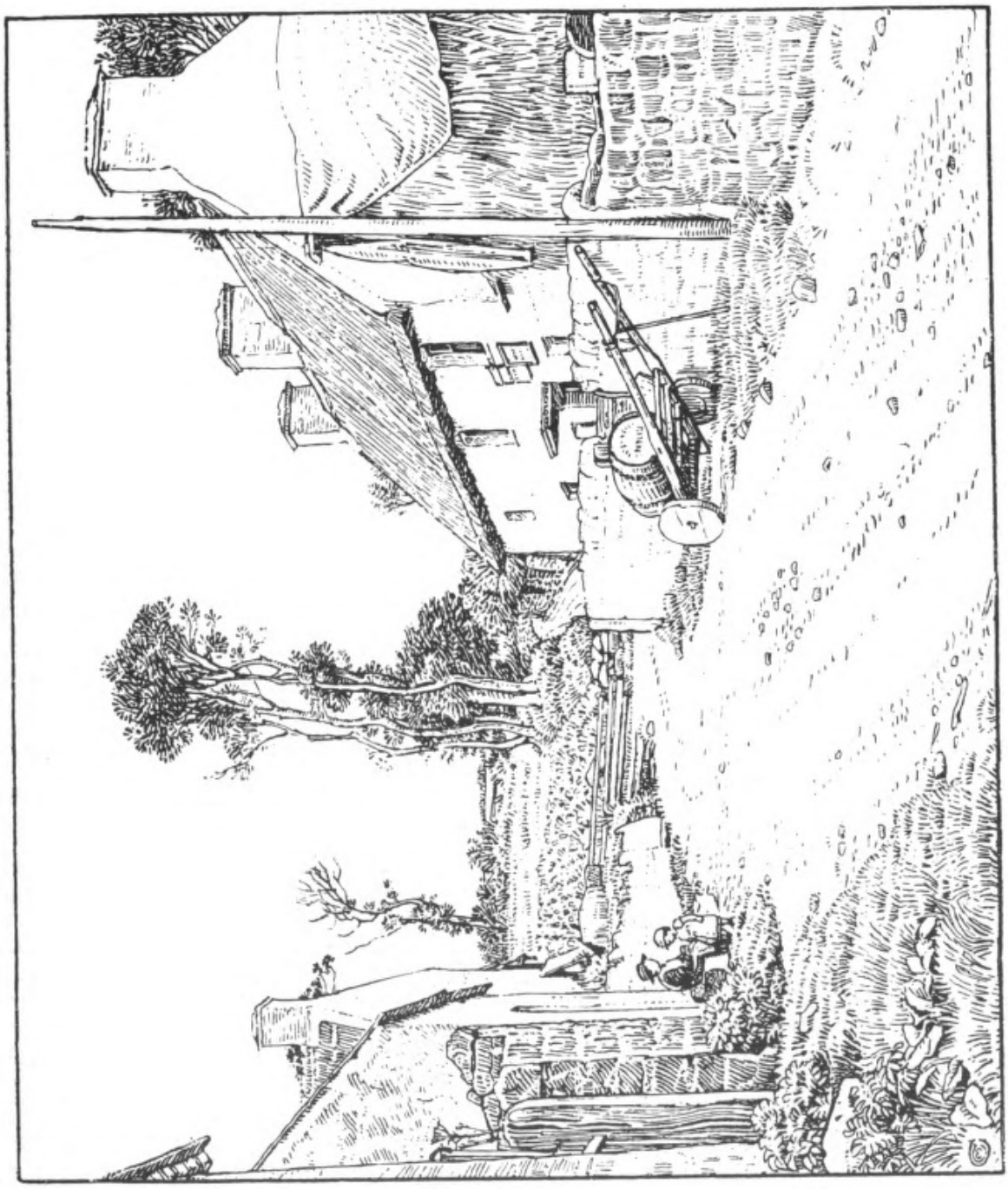
II. Port Eynon, Gower

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Death's Devotion

By Frank Athelstane Swettenham

"How, Death's devotion?
"'Twas he who drank the potion—"

"J'AI cinq cartes à carreaux."

"Combien?"

"Quarante-neuf."

"C'est bon."

"Quinte au roi?"

"Bon."

"Ça fait vingt. I have also quatorze de rois, which makes ninety-four, et trois as, ninety-seven—je joue carreaux, ninety-eight. That is yours and the rest are mine, making me one hundred and nineteen. You are Rubiconed, but, fortunately for you, for the smallest possible number—two hundred and twenty and three twenty-five, I win—five hundred and forty-five in the evening; the luck has been all on my side to-night. Shall we play again?"

"Well, I think as it is past two A.M., it is hardly worth while to begin another game. We will smoke one more cigarette, and you shall tell me of your interview with Death."

"Willingly, but another small brandy and soda will help the tale along."

The

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The man who had so evilly entreated his friend over that last game of *piquet* was Raoul de Marenil, soldier, scientist, courtier and wanderer over the face of the earth, seeking fortune and adventure, and finding with them (for he had brains enough to be successful at almost any game) a great many friends of all nationalities. It was natural that he should have much in common with Englishmen, for his mother was an Englishwoman, and he spoke English and French equally well, and with his intimates mixed up the two languages with a charming but bewildering fluency, though it was evident to those who had more than a casual acquaintance with him that he was at heart a true Frenchman.

After wandering in many lands his business or his inclination had taken him to the furthest East, where for some time he had been the guest of a friend of no importance, named Michael Hardy. It was their nightly practice, when left alone for the evening, to play *piquet* till one or two in the morning, and then, before turning in, to smoke that "last cigarette," which usually meant at least an hour's talk on diverse subjects of mutual interest. This was one of many such evenings, and no circumstances could have been conceived better calculated to frame a tale of love, adventure, or weird experience. A waning Eastern moon, brilliant beyond description, and shining with that blue tinge which is its special peculiarity in the small hours of the morning when the light is most intense, shone over a wide valley, enclosed towards the East by lofty but distant mountains, while Westward the view was limited by the close approach of a broken chain of low hills with spurs projecting out into the valley.

On the summit of the highest of these spurs stood the house where the two men were sitting. Round the foot of the hill wound a river, and this was joined at a point rather to the right front

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front of the house by another stream of equal size. On the banks of these streams clustered the thickly built houses of a picturesque Eastern town, the red roofs striking a note of warm colour in that silvery sheen. On the outskirts of the town, scattered buildings served to relieve the green monotony of luxuriant foliage, while the eye caught here and there glints of water from river-reach or artificial lakelet. In the middle distance stood bold hills, covered with virgin forest and rocky limestone cliffs with vari-coloured sides, so sheer that no foliage would cling to them. Beyond these, haze—miles and miles of hazy distance, through which great mountains seemed to loom, grey and indistinct, and over all the blue heavens; that extraordinary Eastern night-sky, so wondrously blue, that when you see but a patch of it above the fountained courtyard of an Eastern dwelling, you cannot at first feel certain whether it is painted ceiling or the blue empyrean. Unlike those Northern latitudes, where the clearness of the atmosphere seems to invite the gazer to reach down the great stars from heaven, here, in this haze-charged night, they twinkle and glimmer from zenith to horizon, through many a veil of mist; and Venus, alone of all the constellations, dares to dispute the supremacy of the Queen of Night.

The subdued light within the room, the white walls, the lofty ceiling supported by heavy wooden beams resting on fluted, white pillars, the dark polished floor with its thick Persian rugs and skins of tiger and black leopard, the soft colours of the graceful Oriental hangings, the rare prints on the walls, the few but admirably chosen pieces of furniture, the beautiful carvings and embroideries, the best and newest books, all combined to make a singularly attractive interior, full of harmoniously blended colours in striking contrast to the all-pervading radiance of the silver night.

Across

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Across the verandah with its tiers of lovely ferns and foliage plants, through the hanging baskets of many coloured orchids was wafted, on the scarce perceptible breeze, the intoxicating scent of jasmine and chempâka, while the only sound to break the silence was the occasional cry of the night-jar, that curious note which resembles nothing so much as the hollow rattle of a stone thrown across ice on a clear frosty night.

The friends pulled two comfortable chairs to one of the many wide doors that opened on to the marble-paved verandah, and with their backs to the attractions of the immediate surroundings and their faces to the moon-bathed valley beneath, Marenil told his tale.

"I was in Africa," he said, "and had spent months exploring a buried city, where besides meeting with several strange adventures I contracted a horrible fever that completely prostrated me, and made it necessary to abandon my researches and seek the nearest hospital. Unfortunately for me my buried city was far beyond the confines of even comparative civilisation, and by the time my people had carried me to a Government Hospital, where I could get the help of a French surgeon and the nursing of a Sister of Mercy, I was very bad indeed.

"I was too ill to take much notice of the hospital, but you know what the place is like. A long, narrow, white-walled building of one storey with a row of windows on either side, a door at each end, and trestle beds at regular intervals down the sides, the patients' heads next the white-washed walls, their feet towards the vacant space which serves as passage between the beds. By each bed there was a small table and chair, and on the wall, in a tin frame, hung the bed ticket which told the name and date of arrival of the patient, the nature of his ailment and other particulars and possibly the treatment prescribed. I cannot say I noticed

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noticed these particulars when I was carried into the ward; I was too sick of the deadly journey in the hammock through the scorching heat, too feverish and throat-parched, too weary and pain-wracked, perhaps too light-headed to care about anything. I realised that at last the journey was over, that at last that maddening sway of the hammock was exchanged for blessed stillness and cessation from movement, that I seemed to have gone out of burning sunlight into cool shade, and that the tall figures, the dark complexions of my white-robed Arab bearers were exchanged for the sympathetic faces and deft fingers of the hospital surgeon and his devoted attendants.

"I do not know how time went, how long I had lain there, nor how things had fared with me. I think I must have been unconscious for days, but one evening, about 7 P.M., I was vaguely sensible that the Doctor and a Sister were standing by my bed and in hushed voices discussing the probability of my being able to live much beyond the morning. I know that it was borne in on me that their fears were stronger than their hopes, and I was too weak and exhausted to take much interest in my own chances.

"I must have slept shortly after this, for it seemed to me that a long time had elapsed, that midnight had come and passed, and I awoke to see the door towards which I was looking, open slowly and quietly to admit a strange figure. A tall, gaunt skeleton, with unusually large bones, and some kind of weird light in his eye-sockets that made me feel he could see, entered without noise, gently closed the door, and walked rather slowly towards my bed. I realised instantly that he was coming to me, and I noticed that he carried under his left arm a large, leather-bound book which seemed of great age and was closed by two old-fashioned, heavy silver clasps. Over his right shoulder the

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skeleton carried a heavy scythe which showed signs, both as to blade and handle, of much hard usage. Walking round the foot of my bed and stopping behind my little table, the skeleton fixed his curious eye-light on my face and said slowly and rather sadly: 'Je suis la Mort.'

"I was not surprised to hear that Death was my visitor, and I said: 'Bon soir, la Mort, asseyez-vous, s'il vous plait.'

"He thanked me and sat down; then taking the book on his thigh-bone and placing it in a comfortable position by crossing his legs, he unclasped it and looked over the pages till he came to one where he stopped and opening the book wide he turned to me and said: 'This is your page, and herein is inscribed the record of your good and evil deeds since ever you were born. The good are on this side' (pointing to the left page, where I could see there were only two or three short lines of writing), 'the evil are here,' said he, as he laid his hand on the right page of the book. 'I will read the record to you,' he said, as he turned the front of his skull towards me, and I felt those two luminous eye-sockets transfix me. 'First,' said Death, 'I will read your good deeds.'

"The tale of my virtues was soon ended, and did not seem to me to possess any particular value. 'Now,' and again those lambent orbs were turned on me, 'I will read your evil deeds.'

"The catalogue was a long one and it struck me that many of the statements were not worth recording, but truth to tell I was paying little heed, for I was absorbed in watching Death, and wondering how all his bones hung together without any sinews or integuments or even so much as a strand or two of wire.

"You know how you feel when you are so ill that nothing surprises and nothing greatly affects you? That was how I felt, and, while I regarded Death with a mitigated interest and some faint curiosity, while I speculated whether, when he got up, the scythe,

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scythe, which was now leaning against the back of the chair, would knock it down and make a clatter that would wake every one in the Ward, I turned a practically deaf ear to the long list of my crimes, from concealing the truth and stealing sugar, to the robust misdemeanours of later years. There was a sort of rattle, as Death unwound his leg bones and closed the book, which he carefully fastened, saying as he did so, 'To-night your record is closed and you will be required to give an account of it. Now,' he continued, 'my mission is ended, my time is up, and I must leave you.'

"He said this in a tone of dispassionate weariness, but rather as though he regretted having to deliver such an unpleasant message. He stood up and placing the book under his left arm and the scythe over his right shoulder he prepared to go.

"Then, however, the feelings of a host asserted themselves and I said, 'I trust you will not leave without taking something, and I am sorry that there is nothing better to offer you, but pray drink my *tisane* which is on the table by you.' Death gravely thanked me and turning to the table he took the bottle of *tisane* and poured some into the graduated glass measure that stood at his hand. He looked at me for the last time with those curiously lighted eye-sockets and realising, I suppose, the over-grim humour of drinking to my health, he said nothing, but slowly poured the *tisane* through the cavity made by opening his jaws. I watched the liquid with great interest as it trickled down his ribs and back bone, crept along his leg bones and finally reaching the floor made a little pool by the side of the chair. As Death replaced the glass on the table and moved away I felt that his politeness in accepting my *tisane* must have made his bones very uncomfortable, but I hardly liked to suggest that he should dry himself.

"Whilst I still had this in my mind, I saw him reach the door, open

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open it and go out. It could scarce have closed ere I fell asleep.

"In that vague returning consciousness which comes with awakening, that dawn of mental and physical sensation which we can, at will, slightly prolong, but in cases of severe illness is always longer than in health, I heard the Doctor and the Sister talking by my bed, and speaking in eager tones of surprise and delight. I opened my eyes and I saw my friends with faces freed from anxiety smiling into mine.

"'You are safe,' the Doctor said, 'it is only a question of time now, the fever has left you. The change came about 3 A.M., you had been restless till then and we feared the worst, but suddenly you grew quiet and fell into a deep sleep from which we are not sorry to see you awake, for you ought to be fed, though the sleep has saved your life. Your temperature has gone down to almost normal and your pulse is stronger—all you want now is nourishment. You have had a very narrow escape and when you are strong enough you should leave the country for a change to a more temperate climate. You seem to have spilt your *tisane* some time during the night, but we don't know how you did it, for the potion has fallen out of your reach and yet neither bottle nor glass is upset and no one saw you do it.'

"I looked from the Doctor to the floor and there, close by the chair, exactly in the spot where Death had stood, was the still wet stain of the potion which had been so strangely diverted from its legitimate use."

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"Three Blind Mice"

By E. G. Treglown

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Song of Sorrow

By Charles Catty

I CAN sing not of youth or of morning;
I have ears for no music of bird;
I have eyes for no beauty adorning
The lives of young lovers. One warning
I bring you—one bitter cold word:
Sorrow, sorrow, I sing,
Sorrow, sorrow:
The woods echo—Sorrow, and echoing, say—
If it come not to-day,
Then—to-morrow.

I can sing not of love or of laughter;
These fail and are ended and die;
As an echo beneath the wood's rafter
Swoons off, and is heard never after,
So love and so laughter wing by.
Sorrow, sorrow, I sing,
Sorrow, sorrow:
The years answer—Sorrow, and answering, say—
Ye who weep not to-day
Will to-morrow.

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The Sweet o' the Year

By Ella Hepworth Dixon

INDOORS, in the austere northern light of the studio, one hardly realised that the trees on the boulevard were all a-flutter in their pale green garments, that outside, all over Paris, the fairy-tale of spring was being told. The only vernal sound which the painter could hear as he worked, was the monotonous cooing of a pair of ring-doves, whose cage hung at the end of the passage, at an open door which gave on a strip of sun-flooded court. Intermittently, he could hear, too, the shuffling of a pair of feet—feet which pottered about in the aimless way of the old and tired. The familiar sound brought up a vision of Virginie, the woman who swept out the studio, kept the models from the door, and made him an excellent *tisane* when he was out of sorts. Yes, Virginie certainly had her uses, although she was old, and shrivelled and unsightly. The young man hummed a love-song of Chaminade's as he stepped away from his picture, screwing up his eyes the better to judge of the values. Poor, bent old Virginie, with the failing memory, the parchment skin, and the formless lips! He was sorry for women—even for old women. Being a Frenchman, he had an innately tender regard for the sex.

"The world is made for men," he said to himself, "*tiens*, I am glad I was born a man."

And

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And all the while Virginie, busy among her pots and pans at the end of the passage, was thinking about her master. She was proud of his talent, of his success, above all, of his youth and good looks. She rejoiced that, although M. Georges was barely thirty, he was already *hors concours* at the Salon, that he could afford so big a studio. The young men made more money nowadays. . . . Why, it was a finer atelier than *he* used to have—the greatest painter of his day in France, the famous Jean Vaillant.

The stove had not yet been lighted, and, in spite of the sunshine outside, it was chilly in the kitchen, where Virginie was scouring the pans. At seventy, after a lifetime of anxiety and of toil; of rising at the dawn, of scrubbing, cleaning, cooking, washing: at seventy, one has no longer much warmth in one's veins. And then the blond, spring sunshine only made her feel dizzy; she had a cough which troubled her, and queer pains in her bones. . . . "Maybe," she nodded to herself, "that it is not for long that I am here. Poor M. Georges."

An imperious ring at the outer bell made her hurry to the door. Her face fell as she encountered a fantastic hat loaded with lilac, a fresh spring toilet, a pair of handsome eyes, and a triumphant smile. She began to grumble.

"M. Georges was at home, yes. But he was busy. He was hard at work on a picture. The back-ground of a portrait which must be finished this week. Could not Mademoiselle call again?"

"Ah, but he will see me," declared the Lilac Hat, pushing by, and leaving a pungent odour of chypre behind her as she passed, with her rustling silk linings and her overpowering air of femininity. Virginie shuffled after her to the studio door.

"Mlle. Rose," she announced.

The young man threw down his palette and brushes, and turned, his face alight.

As

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As Virginie went back alone down the narrow passage, there was a curious silence in the atelier, broken, at last, by the murmur of soft, happy voices.

"Tas de saletés," grumbled Virginie, "she'll not let him do any more work to-day." A strange spasm of jealousy seized her. The little incident—though she had often witnessed it before—seemed somehow to accentuate to-day her own senility, her failing powers, her rapid detachment from life. It reminded her, too, of things that had occurred half a century ago. Well, she would like to show M. Georges that she, too At any rate, she had the letters still; she would give them to him this afternoon—when Mlle. Rose had gone, before he went out. After all, who should have them except M. Georges? He, at least, would keep them if anything happened to her. Suddenly the old woman felt a lump at her throat, a curious, choking sensation. She stepped to the window, and pushed it open.

Outside, a light easterly wind was shaking an almond-tree in full blossom, making a fluttering pink cloud against the clear April sky. The ring-doves in their wicker cage were cooing in an amorous ecstasy. . . .

Presently, with her heavy step, she turned into the cupboard which served her for a bed-room. In one corner stood a locked box, dusty with disuse, at which she fumbled nervously with a rusty key. Then, with palsied, trembling fingers, she drew out an ancient packet of letters, tied with a ribbon which had perhaps once been rose-coloured.

By and bye, when the light had lessened, Virginie knocked timidly at the studio-door. Mlle. Rose had been gone some time now, yet there still hung about the room a faint odour of chypre.

"Mais entrez donc, ma vieille!" called out the young painter, kindly,

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kindly, glancing over his shoulder as he stood at his easel. "What is it that you want?"

"Nothing, M. Georges. It is something that I thought you might like to have. You collect such things—letters, autographs. And you, too, are an artist. One day—who knows—you may be as great as him?"

He came forward, surprised, and took the bundle of letters from her shaking fingers—dingy, folded sheets of paper, which had once been fastened by wafers, and which bore the dates of April and May, 1846. Running his eye across some of the yellow pages, covered with faded ink, he glanced at the signatures. "Why, they are priceless!" he cried. "Love-letters from Jean Vaillant? Where, in Heaven's name, did you get them, Virginie?"

"But they are mine! Yes, yes, M. Jean wrote them to me. Ah, but I did not always sweep studios and open doors. I was pretty once, M. Georges. I was a model. He chose me for his *Baigneuse.* It is in the Luxembourg now; they say it will be in the Louvre. M. Jean was very fond of me. *Dame!* that is all nearly fifty years ago, now," she muttered, stooping, with the patient humility of the poor, to pick up some of the yellow sheets which had fallen to the ground.

He knelt down, too, and helped to collect the letters.

"But read them, M. Georges!" A rosy flush of belated feminine pride had crept over her shrunken cheeks. He began to read aloud the letter he held in his hand. It was an intimate revelation of the heart of him whom the younger generation spoke of always as the Master.

"*I want to tell you again how your eyes haunt me, and how I delight in your beauty. . . .*"

She stood there timidly, as he read aloud, with her seamed face, and her little, faded eyes fixed on her master. A white cap was tied

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tied beneath her shrivelled chin; a loose camisole covered her shrunken chest, a meagre petticoat revealed her bony ankles.

"*Your beauty, which is so strangely complex, for it has not only a child's sweetness, but a woman's seduction. Ah, you are indeed an exquisite creature. . . .*"

He raised his eyes and looked at the familiar figure of Virginie. All at once the bent, unsightly form seemed invested with the sweetness, the purity, the dignity of the young girl; round her head, with its sparse white hair, there rested, for an instant, the aureole of the woman who is beloved.

"*Whether you wish it or no, you will be for ever my inspiration, my dream, my reward. I was like a man asleep, and you, Virginie, have awoken me.*"

A feeble smile of satisfied vanity flickered over the old woman's face. She nodded her head as he went on reading, her knotted hands twisted nervously together. Time, with his corroding finger, had seared and branded her out of all semblance of a woman. She represented nothing but the long, the inexorable degradation of life.

"*Nothing will ever make me forget the unearthly beauty of your face, nor the hours we have passed together. . . .*"

Gently the young man laid the letter down. His eyes had filled with tears; he could no longer see the words. And then, reverently, he folded it with the rest, and, opening the drawer of an antique cabinet, he locked his new-found treasures up.

"Sapristi! Mais ce n'est pas amusant—la vie," he muttered, watching the bent figure of the old woman as she passed, presently, mumbling and nodding, out of the studio, to be swallowed up in the vague shadows of the passage. Suddenly it felt cold and dismal in the great room.

"Non, ce n'est pas gaie, la vie," he repeated; "at least, not when

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when we live too long. Well, let us make haste to amuse ourselves while we are young."

Rapidly he cleaned up his palette, and put on another coat. Rose had promised to wait for him for dinner, he remembered, and there had even been talk of a ball in the Quartier.

Virginie was patching an old skirt as he passed out by the little kitchen. It had turned much colder, and she had drawn up a chair near the stove.

Gently, deferentially, he took her withered hand and kissed it.

"Hommage à la maîtresse de Jean Vaillant," he murmured gaily. "Has she any commission for her humble servant?"

The old woman's eyes lit up. Outside, there was already something of the cold serenity of evening in the still, primrose-coloured sky. The ring-doves were silent now, huddled together in their wicker cage, their beaks tucked beneath their wings.

"If monsieur," she said humbly, "would give himself the trouble to bring me a small bottle of some cordial? *Dame!* In the spring one feels chilly, M. Georges. Yes, the old feel chilly in the spring."

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"Binnorie, O Binnorie"

By Evelyn Holden

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AND STRAIGHT IT BEGAN TO PLAY ALONE
BY THE BONNY MILLDAMS O' BINNORIE
O YONDER SITS MY FATHER THE KING
BINNORIE O BINNORIE
AND YONDER SITS MY MOTHER THE QUEEN
BY THE BONNY MILLDAMS OF BINNORIE

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Two Sonnets from Petrarch

By Richard Garnett, LL.D., C.B.

I—Laura Weeping

WHERE'ER I shift my weary eyes, to know
If ancient charm by new may be dispelled,
They see but her whom whilom they beheld,
And urge rekindling fires to deeper glow.
Conjunction of sweet ruth and lovely woe
Enthrals the gentle heart ; nor thus compelled
The eye alone, but ear is captive held,
Haunted by thrilling speech and sighings low.
And Love and Truth affirm with me that sight
So exquisite as mine was seen of none
By splendour of the day or starry light ;
Nor plaint so musical e'er broke upon
The ear of man ; or shower of drops so bright
From eyes so fair e'er sparkled to the sun.

Love

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II—She should have Died Hereafter!

Love had at length a tranquil port displayed
To travailed soul, long vexed by toil and teen,
In calm maturity, where naked seen
Is Vice, and Virtue in fair garb arrayed.
Bare to her eyes my heart should now be laid,
Disquieted no more their peace serene—
O Death, what harvest of long years hath been
Ruin by thee in one brief moment made!
The hour when unreproved I might invoke
Her chaste ear's favour, and disburden there
My breast of fond and ancient thought, drew nigh:
And she, perchance, considering as I spoke,
Each bloomless face and either's silvered hair,
Some blessed word had uttered with a sigh.

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Poor Romeo !

By Max Beerbohm

EVEN now Bath glories in his legend, not idly, for he was the most fantastic animal that ever stepped upon her pavement. Were ever a statue given him (and indeed he is worthy of a grotesque in marble), it would be put in Pulteney Street or the Circus. I know that the palm-trees of Antigua overshadowed his cradle, that there must be even now in Boulogne many who set eyes on him in the time of his less fatuous declension, that he died in London. But Mr. Coates (for of that Romeo I write) must be claimed by none of these places. Bath saw the laughable disaster of his *début*, and so, in a manner, his whole life seems to belong to her, and the story of it to be a part of her annals.

The Antiguan was already on the brink of middle-age when he first trod the English shore. But, for all his thirty-seven years, he had the heart of a youth, and, his purse being yet as heavy as his heart was light, the English sun seemed to shine gloriously about his path and gild the letters of introduction that he scattered everywhere. Also, he was a gentleman of amiable, nearly elegant mien, and something of a scholar. His father had been the most respectable resident Antigua could show, so that little Robert, the future Romeo, had often sat at dessert with distinguished travellers through the Indies. But in the year 1807

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old Mr. Coates had died. As we may read in Vol. lxxviii. of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, "the Almighty, whom he alone feared, was pleased to take him from this life, after having sustained an untarnished reputation for seventy-three years," a passage which, though objectionable in its theology, gives the true story of Romeo's antecedents and disposes of the later calumnies that declared him the son of a tailor. Realising that he was now an orphan, an orphan with not a few grey hairs, our hero had set sail in quest of amusing adventure.

For three months he took the waters of Bath, unobtrusively, like other well-bred visitors. His attendance was solicited for all the most fashionable routs and at assemblies he sat always in the shade of some titled turban. In fact, Mr. Coates was a great success. There was an air of most romantic mystery that endeared his presence to all the damsels fluttering fans in the Pump Room. It set them vying for his conduct through the mazes of the Quadrille or of the Triumph and blushing at the sound of his name. Alas! their tremulous rivalry lasted not long. Soon they saw that Emma, sole daughter of Sir James Tylney Long, that wealthy baronet, had cast a magic net about the warm Antiguan heart. In the wake of her chair, by night and day, Mr. Coates was obsequious. When she cried that she would not drink the water without some delicacy to banish the iron taste, it was he who stood by with a box of vanilla-rusks. When he shaved his great moustachio, it was at her caprice. And his devotion to Miss Emma was the more noted for that his own considerable riches were proof that it was true and single. He himself warned her, in some verses written for him by Euphemia Boswell, against the crew of penniless admirers who surrounded her:

"Lady,

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"Lady, ah! too bewitching lady! now beware
Of artful men that fain would thee ensnare,
Not for thy merit, but thy fortune's sake.
Give me your hand—your cash let venals take."

Miss Emma was his first love. To understand his subsequent behaviour, let us remember that Cupid's shaft pierces most poignantly the breast of middle age. Not that Mr. Coates was laughed at in Bath for a love-a-lack-a-daisy. On the contrary, his mien, his manner, were as yet so studiously correct, his speech so reticent, that laughter had been unusually inept. The only strange taste evinced by him was his devotion to theatricals. He would hold forth, by the hour, upon the fine conception of such parts as Macbeth, Othello and, especially, Romeo. Many ladies and gentlemen were privileged to hear him recite, in this or that drawing-room, after supper. All testified to the real fire with which he inflamed the lines of love or hatred. His voice, his gesture, his scholarship, were all approved. A fine symphony of praise assured Mr. Coates that no suitor worthier than he had ever courted Thespis. The lust for the footlights' glare grew lurid in his mothish eye. What, after all, were these poor triumphs of the parlour? It might be that contemptuous Emma, hearing the loud salvos of the gallery and boxes, would call him at length her lord.

At this time there arrived at the York House Mr. Pryse Gordon, whose memoirs we know. Mr. Coates himself was staying at number ** Gay Street, but was in the habit of breakfasting daily at the York House, where he attracted Mr. Gordon's attention by "rehearsing passages from Shakespeare, with a tone and gesture extremely striking both to the eye and the ear." Mr. Gordon warmly complimented him and suggested that he should give a public exposition of his art. The cheeks of the amateur flushed

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flushed with pleasure. "I am ready and willing," he replied, "to play 'Romeo' to a Bath audience, if the manager will get up the play and give me a good 'Juliet'; my costume is superb and adorned with diamonds, but I have not the advantage of knowing the manager, Dimonds." Pleased by the stranger's ready wit, Mr. Gordon scribbled a note of introduction to Dimonds there and then. So soon as he had "discussed a brace of muffins and so many eggs," the new Romeo started for the playhouse, and that very day bills were posted to the effect that "a Gentleman of Fashion would make his first appearance on February 9 in a *rôle* of Shakespeare." All the lower boxes were immediately secured by Lady Belmore and other lights of Bath. "Butlers and Abigails," it is said, "were commanded by their mistresses to take their stand in the centre of the pit and give Mr. Coates a capital, hearty clapping." Indeed, throughout the week that elapsed before the *première*, no pains were spared in assuring a great success. Miss Tylney Long showed some interest in the arrangements. Gossip spoke of her as a likely bride.

The night came. Fashion, Virtue, and Intellect thronged the house. Nothing could have been more cordial than the temper of the gallery. All were eager to applaud the new Romeo. Presently, when the varlets of Verona had brawled, there stepped into the square—what?—a mountebank, a monstrosity. Hurrah died upon every lip. The house was thunderstruck. Whose legs were in those scarlet pantaloons? Whose face grinned over that bolster-cravat, and under that Charles II. wig and opera-hat? From whose shoulders hung that spangled, sky-blue cloak? Was this bedizened scarecrow the Amateur of Fashion for sight of whom they had paid their shillings? At length a voice from the gallery cried, "Good evening, Mr. Coates!" and, as the Antiguan—for he it was—bowed low, the theatre

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theatre was filled with yells of merriment. Only the people in the boxes were still silent, staring coldly at the *protégé* who had played them so odious a prank. Lady Belmore rose and called for her chariot. Her example was followed by several ladies of rank. The rest sat spellbound, and of their number was Miss Tylney Long, at whose rigid face many glasses were, of course, directed. Meanwhile the play proceeded. Those lines that were not drowned in laughter Mr. Coates spoke in the most foolish and extravagant manner. He cut little capers at odd moments. He laid his hand on his heart and bowed, now to this, now to that part of the house, always with a grin. In the balcony-scene he produced a snuff-box, and, after taking a pinch, offered it to the bewildered Juliet. Coming down to the footlights, he laid it on the cushion of the stage-box and begged the inmates to refresh themselves, and to "pass the golden trifle on." The performance, so obviously grotesque, was just the kind of thing to please the gods. The limp of Vulcan could not have called laughter so unquenchable from their lips. It is no trifle to set Englishmen laughing, but once you have done it, you can hardly stop them. Act after act of the beautiful love-play was performed without one sign of satiety from the seers of it. The laughter rather swelled in volume. Romeo died in so ludicrous a way that a cry of "encore" arose and the death was actually twice repeated. At the fall of the curtain there was prolonged applause. Mr. Coates came forward, and the good-humoured public pelted him with fragments of the benches. One splinter struck his right temple, inflicting a scar, of which Mr. Coates was, in his old age, not a little proud. Such is the traditional account of this curious *début*. Mr. Pryse Gordon, however, in his memoirs tells another tale. He professes to have seen nothing peculiar in Romeo's dress, save its display of fine diamonds,

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diamonds, and to have admired the whole interpretation. The attitude of the audience he attributes to a hostile cabal. John R. and Hunter H. Robinson, in their memoir of Romeo Coates, echo Mr. Pryse Gordon's tale. They would have done well to weigh their authorities more accurately.

I had often wondered at this discrepancy between document and tradition. Last Spring, when I was in Bath for a few days, my mind brooded especially on the question. Indeed, Bath, with her faded memories, her *tristesse*, drives one to reverie. Fashion no longer smiles from her windows nor dances in her sunshine, and in her deserted parks the invalids build up their constitutions. Now and again, as one of the frequent chairs glided past me, I wondered if its shadowy freight were the ghost of poor Romeo. I felt sure that the traditional account of his *début* was mainly correct. How could it, indeed, be false? Tradition is always a safer guide to truth than is the tale of one man. I might amuse myself here, in Bath, by verifying my notion of the *début* or proving it false.

One morning I was walking through a narrow street in the western quarter of Bath, and came to the window of a very little shop, which was full of dusty books, prints, and engravings. I spied in one corner of it the discoloured print of a queer, lean figure, posturing in a garden. In one hand this figure held a snuff-box, in the other an opera-hat. Its sharp features and wide grin, flanked by luxuriant whiskers, looked strange under a Caroline wig. Above it was a balcony and a lady in an attitude of surprise. Beneath it were these words, faintly lettered: *Bombastes Coates wooing the Peerless Capulet, that's 'nough* (*that snuff*) 1809. I coveted the print. I went into the shop.

A very old man peered at me and asked my errand. I pointed to the print of Mr. Coates, which he gave me for a few shillings, chuckling at the pun upon the margin.

"Ah,"

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"Ah," he said, "they're forgetting him now, but he was a fine figure, a fine sort of figure."

"You saw him?"

"No, no. I'm only seventy. But I've known those who saw him. My father had a pile of such prints."

"Did your father see him?" I asked, as the old man furled my treasure and tied it with a piece of tape.

"My father, sir, was a friend of Mr. Coates," he said. "He entertained him in Gay Street. Mr. Coates was my father's lodger all the months he was in Bath. A good tenant, too. Never eccentric under my father's roof—never eccentric."

I begged the old bookseller to tell me more of Mr. Coates. It seemed that his father had been a citizen of some consequence and had owned a house in modish Gay Street, where he let lodgings. Thither, by the advice of a friend, Mr. Coates had gone so soon as he arrived in the town, and had stayed there down to the day after his *début*, when he left for London.

"My father often told me that Mr. Coates was crying bitterly when he settled the bill and got into his travelling-chaise. He'd come back from the playhouse the night before as cheerful as could be. He'd said *he* didn't mind what the public thought of his acting. But in the morning a letter was brought for him, and when he read it he seemed to go quite mad."

"I wonder what was in the letter!" I asked. "Did your father never know who sent it?"

"Ah," my greybeard rejoined, "that's the most curious thing. And it's a secret. I can't tell you."

He was not as good as his word. I bribed him delicately with the purchase of more than one old book. Also, I think he was flattered by my eager curiosity to learn his long-pent secret. He told me that the letter was brought to the house by one of the footmen

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footmen of Sir John Tilney Long, and that his father himself delivered it into the hands of Mr. Coates.

"When he had read it through, the poor gentleman tore it into many fragments and stood staring before him, pale as a ghost. 'I must not stay another hour in Bath,' he said. When he was gone, my father (God forgive him!) gathered up all the scraps of the letter and for a long time he tried to piece them together. But there were a great many of them, and my father was not a scholar, though he was affluent."

"What became of the scraps?" I asked. "Did your father keep them?"

"Yes, he did. And I used to try, when I was younger, to make out something from them. But even I never seemed to get near it. I've never thrown them away, though. They're in a box."

I got them for a piece of gold that I could ill spare—some score or so of shreds of yellow paper traversed with pale ink. The joy of the archæologist with an unknown papyrus, of the detective with a clue, surged in me. Indeed, I was not sure whether I was engaged in private inquiry or in research; so recent, so remote was the mystery. After two days' labour, I marshalled the elusive words. This is the text of them:

Mr. Coates, Sir,

They say Revenge is sweet. I am fortunate to find it is so. I have compelled you to be far more a Fool than you made me at the *fête-champêtre* of Lady B. & I, having accomplished my aim, am ready to forgive you now, as you implored me on the occasion of the *fête*. But pray build no Hope that I, forgiving you, will once more regard you as my Suitor. For that cannot ever be. I decided you should show yourself a Fool before many people. But such Folly does not commend your hand to mine. Therefore desist your irksome attention

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attention &, if need be, begone from Bath. I have punished you, & would save my eyes the *trouble* to turn away from your person. I pray that you regard this epistle as privileged and private.

E. T. L. 10 *of February.*

The letter lies before me, as I write. It is written throughout in a firm and very delicate Italian hand. Under the neat initials is drawn, instead of the ordinary flourish, an arrow, and the absence of any erasure in a letter of such moment suggests a calm, deliberate character and perhaps rough copies. I did not at the time suffer my fancy to linger over the tessilated document. I set to elucidating the reference to the *fête-champêtre.* As I retraced my footsteps to the little book-shop, I wondered if I should find any excuse for the cruel faithlessness of Emma Tilney Long.

The bookseller was greatly excited when I told him I had recreated the letter. He was very eager to see it. I did not pander to his curiosity. He even offered to buy the article back at cost price. I asked him if he had ever heard, in his youth, of any scene that had passed between Miss Tilney Long and Mr. Coates at some *fête-champêtre.* The old man thought for some time, but he could not help me. Where then, I asked him, could I search old files of local newspapers? He told me that there were supposed to be many such files mouldering in the archives of the Town Hall.

I secured access, without difficulty, to these files. A whole day I spent in searching the copies issued by this and that journal during the months that Romeo was in Bath. In the yellow pages of these forgotten prints I came upon many complimentary allusions to Mr. Coates: "The visitor welcomed (by all our aristocracy) from distant Ind," "the ubiquitous," "the charitable

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able *riche*." Of his "forthcoming impersonation of Romeo and Juliet" there were constant puffs, quite in the modern manner. The accounts of his *début* all showed that Mr. Pryse Gordon's account of it was fabulous. In one paper there was a bitter attack on "Mr. Gordon, who was responsible for this insult to Thespian art, the gentry, and the people, for he first arranged the *whole production*"—an extract which makes it clear that this gentleman had a good motive for his version of the affair.

But I began to despair of ever learning what happened at the *fête-champêtre*. There were accounts of "a grand garden party, whereto Lady Belper, on March the twenty-eighth, invited a host of fashionable persons." The names of Mr. Coates and of "Sir James Tilney Long and his daughter" were duly recorded in the lists. But that was all. I turned at length to a tiny file, consisting of five copies only, *Bladud's Courier*. Therein I found this paragraph, followed by some scurrilities which I will not quote:

"Mr. C**t*s, who will act Romeo (*Wherefore art thou Romeo?*) this coming week for the pleasure of *his fashionable circle*, incurred the contemptuous wrath of his Lady Fair at the Fête. It was a sad pity she entrusted him to hold her purse while she fed the gold-fishes. He was very proud of the honour till the gold fell from his hand among the gold-fishes. How appropriate was the misadventure! But Miss Black Eyes, angry at her loss and her swain's clumsiness, cried: 'Jump into the pond, sir, and find my purse, *instanter!*' Several wags encouraged her, and the ladies were of the opinion that her adorer should certainly dive for the treasure. 'Alas,' the fellow said, 'I cannot swim, Miss. But tell me how many guineas you carried and I will make them good to yourself.' There was a great deal of laughter at this encounter, and *the haughty damsel turned on her heel*, nor did she vouchsafe another word to her *elderly* lover.

"When

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"When recreant man
Meets lady's wrath, &c. &c."

So the story of the *début* was complete! Was ever a lady more inexorable, more ingenious, in her revenge? One can fancy the poor Antiguan going to the Baronet's house next day with a bouquet of flowers and passionately abasing himself, craving her forgiveness. One can fancy the wounded vanity of the girl, her shame that people had mocked her for the disobedience of her suitor. Revenge, as her letter shows, became her one thought. She would strike him through his other love, the love of Thespis. "I have compelled you," she wrote afterwards, in her bitter triumph, "to be a greater Fool than you made me." She, then, it was that drove him to his public absurdity; she who insisted that he should never win her unless he sacrificed his dear longing for stage-laurels and actually pilloried himself upon the stage. The wig, the pantaloons, the snuff-box, the grin, were all conceived, I fancy, in her pitiless spite. It is possible that she did but say: "The more ridiculous you make yourself, the more hope for you." But I do not believe that Mr. Coates, a man of no humour, conceived the means himself. *They* were surely hers.

It is terrible to think of the ambitious amateur in his bedroom, secretly practising hideous antics or gazing at his absurd apparel before a mirror. How loth must he have been to desecrate the lines he loved so dearly and had longed to declaim in all their beauty and their resonance! And then, at the daily rehearsals, with how sad a smile must he have received the compliments of Mr. Dimonds on his fine performance, knowing how different it would all be "on the night!" Nothing could have steeled him to the ordeal but his great love. He must have wavered, had not the exaltation of his love protected him. The jeers of the mob must

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must have been music in his hearing, his wounds love-symbols. Then came the girl's cruel contempt of his martyrdom.

Aphrodite, who has care of lovers, did not spare Miss Tylney Long. She made her love, a few months after, one who married her for her fortune and broke her heart. In years of misery the wayward girl worked out the penance of her unpardonable sin, dying, at length, in poverty and despair. Into the wounds of him who had so truly loved her was poured, after a space of fourteen years, the balsam of another love. On the 6th of September 1823, at St. George's, Hanover Square, Mr. Coates was married to Miss Anne Robinson, who was a faithful and devoted wife to him till he died.

Meanwhile, the rejected Romeo did not long repine. Two months after the tragedy at Bath, he was at Brighton, mingling with all the fashionable folk and giving admirable recitations at routs. He was seen every day on the Parade, attired in an extravagant manner, very different to that he had adopted in Bath. A pale-blue *surtout*, tasselled Hessians, and a cocked hat were the most obvious items of his costume. He also affected a very curious tumbril, shaped like a shell and richly gilded. In this he used to drive around, every afternoon, amid the gapes of the populace. It is evident that, once having tasted the fruit of notoriety, he was loth to fall back on simpler fare. He had become a prey to the love of absurd ostentation. A lively example of dandyism unrestrained by taste, he parodied in his person the foibles of Mr. Brummell and the King. His diamonds and his equipage and other follies became the gossip of every newspaper in England. Nor did a day pass without the publication of some little rigmarole from his pen. Wherever there was a vacant theatre—were it in Cheltenham, Birmingham, or any other town—he would engage it for his productions. One night he would play his favourite part,

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part, Romeo, with reverence and ability. The next, he would repeat his first travesty in all its hideous harlequinade. Indeed, there can be little doubt that Mr. Coates, with his vile performances, must be held responsible for the decline of dramatic art in England and the invasion of the amateur. The sight of such folly, strutting unabashed, spoilt the prestige of the theatre. To-day our stage is filled with tailors' dummy heroes, with heroines who have real curls and can open and shut their eyes, and, at a pinch, say "mamma" and "papa." We must blame the Antiguan, I fear, for their existence. It was he—the rascal!—who first spread that *scenæ sacra fames*. Some say that he was a schemer and impostor, feigning eccentricity for his private ends. They are quite wrong. Mr. Coates was a very good man. He never made a penny out of his performances; he even lost many hundred pounds. Moreover, as his speeches before the curtain and his letters to the papers show, he took himself quite seriously. Only the insane take themselves quite seriously.

It was the unkindness of his love that maddened him. But he lived to be the lightest-hearted of lunatics, and caused great amusement for many years. Whether we think of him in his relation to history or psychology, dandiacal or dramatic art, he is a salient, pathetic figure. That he is memorable for his defects, not for his qualities, I know. But Romeo, in the tragedy of his wild love and frail intellect, in the folly that stretched the corners of his "peculiar grin" and shone in his diamonds and was emblazoned upon his tumbril, is more suggestive than some sages. He was so fantastic an animal that Oblivion were indeed amiss. If no more, he was a great Fool. In any case, it would be fun to have seen him.

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Two Drawings

By A. T. Gaskin

I. The Artist's Mother

II. A Book Plate for Georgie Evelyn Cave Gaskin.

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Sunshine

By Olive Custance

Oh, Sunshine Spirit, I have seen
Your gold wings spread aslant the green;
Have watched their splendours trail along
The woodland ways where wild flowers throng,
And seen your slim feet slip between;

Looked on your limbs so shimmerous white,
Flushed in a lucent mist of light;
Seen your child face peer wildly fair
Through parted strands of shining hair,
And wist not if I saw aright!

In gardens where tired feet can wade
Through flowers set thick in slumbrous shade—
Across wide languorous lawns sun-swept,
Your fleeting fairy form has crept
Between the shadows unafraid. . . .

Because

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Because your subtle smile had caught
My soul in tangled trance of thought—
Your sweet hushed speech I strove to hear,
You seemed to sway so strangely near . . .
Sun-Vision, was it I you sought?

A mortal maid, whose heart is yet
Too full of all the world's vain fret—
The mournful music of this Star—
That you who have been born afar
Hear only faintly—and forget. . . .

Stay, Spirit 'neath these sighing trees,
Whose lace-like shadow broideries
Dapple your dainty loveliness. . . .
Are you a dream? I cannot guess . . .
God's earth is full of mysteries. . . .

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A Journey of Little Profit

By John Buchan

"The Devil he sang, the Devil he played
High and fast and free.
And this was ever the song he made,
As it was told to me.
'Oh, I am the king of the air and the ground,
And lord of the seasons' roll,
And I will give you a hundred pound,
If you will give me your soul.'"

The Ballad of Grey Weather.

THE cattle market of Inverforth is, as all men know north of the Tweed, the greatest market of the kind in the land. For days in the late Autumn there is the lowing of oxen and the bleating of sheep among its high wooden pens, and in the rickety sale-rings the loud clamour of auctioneers and the talk of farmers. In the open yard where are the drovers and the butchers, a race always ungodly and law-despising, there is such a Babel of cries and curses as might wake the Seven Sleepers. From twenty different adjacent eating-houses comes the clatter of knives, where the country folk eat their dinner of beef and potatoes, with beer for sauce, and the collies grovel on the ground for stray morsels. Hither come a hundred types of men from the Highland cateran with

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with scarce a word of English, and the shentleman-farmer of Inverness and Ross, to lowland graziers and city tradesmen, not to speak of blackguards of many nationalities and more professions.

It was there I first met Duncan Stewart of Clachamharstan, in the Moor of Rannoch, and there I heard this story. He was an old man when I knew him, grizzled and wind-beaten; a prosperous man, too, with many herds like Jacob and much pasture. He had come down from the North with kyloes, and as he waited on the Englishmen with whom he had trysted, he sat with me through the long day and beguiled the time with many stories. He had been a drover in his youth, and had travelled on foot the length and breadth of Scotland; and his memory went back hale and vigorous to times which are now all but historical. This tale I heard among many others as we sat on a pen amid the smell of beasts and the jabber of Gaelic:

"When I was just turned of twenty-five I was a wild young lad as ever was heard of. I had taken to the droving for the love of a wild life, and a wild life I led. My father's heart would be broken long syne with my doings, and well for my mother that she was in her grave since I was six years old. I paid no heed to the ministrations of godly Mr. Macdougall of the Isles, who bade me turn from the error of my ways, but went on my own evil course, making siller, for I was a braw lad at the work and a trusted, and knowing the inside of every public from the pier of Cromarty to the streets of York. I was a wild drinker, caring in my cups for neither God nor man, a great hand with the cards, and fond of the lasses past all telling. It makes me shameful to this day to think on my evil life when I was twenty-five.

"Well, it chanced that in the back of the month of September I found myself in the city of Edinburgh with a flock of fifty sheep which

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which I had bought as a venture from a drunken bonnet-laird and was thinking of selling somewhere wast the country. They were braw beasts, Leicester every one of them, well-fed and dirt-cheap at the price I gave. So it was with a light heart that I drove them out of the town by the Merchiston Road along by the face of the Pentlands. Two or three friends came with me, all like myself for folly, but maybe a little bit poorer. Indeed, I cared little for them, and they valued me only for the whisky which I gave them to drink my health in at the parting. They left me on the near side of Colinton, and I went on my way alone.

"Now, if you'll be remembering the road, you will mind that at the place called Kirk Newton, just afore the road begins to twine over the Big Muir and almost at the head of the Water o' Leith, there is a verra fine public. Indeed, it would be no lee to call it the best public between Embro' and Glesca. The good wife, Lucky Craik by name, was an old friend of mine, for many a good gill of her prandy have I bought; so what would I be doing but just turning aside for refreshment? She met me at the door, verra pleased-like to see me, and soon I had my legs aneath her table and a basin of toddy on the board before me. And whom did I find in the same place but my old comrade Toshie Maclean from the backside of Glen-Lyon. Toshie and I were acquaintances so old that it did not behoove us to be parting quick. Forbye the day was chill without; and within the fire was grand and the crack of the best.

"Then Toshie and I got on quarrelling about the price of Lachlan Farawa's beasts that he sold at Falkirk; and, the drink having aye a bad effect on my temper, I was for giving him the lie and coming off in a great rage. It was about six o'clock in the evening and an hour to nightfall, so Mistress Craik comes in to try and keep me. 'Losh, Duncan,' says she, 'ye'll never try and

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and win ower the muir the nicht. It's mae than ten mile to Carnwath, and there's nocht atween it and this but whaups and heathery braes.' But when I am roused I will be more obstinate than ten mules, so I would be going, though I knew not under Heaven where I was going till. I was too full of good liquor and good meat to be much worth at thinking, so I got my sheep on the road an a big bottle in my pouch and set off into the heather. I knew not what my purpose was, whether I thought to reach the shieling of Carnwath, or whether I expected some house of entertainment to spring up by the wayside. But my fool's mind was set on my purpose of getting some miles further in my journey ere the coming of darkness.

"For some time I jogged happily on, with my sheep running well before me and my dogs trotting at my heels. We left the trees behind and struck out on the proad grassy path which bands the moor like the waist-strap of a sword. It was most dreary and lonesome with never a house in view, only bogs and grey hillsides and ill-looking waters. It was stony, too, and this more than aught else caused my Dutch courage to fail me, for I soon fell wearied, since much whisky is bad travelling fare, and began to curse my folly. Had my pride no kept me back, I would have returned to Lucky Craik's; but I was like the devil for stiff-neckedness and thought of nothing but to push on.

"I own that I was verra well tired and quite spiritless when I first saw the House. I had scarce been an hour on the way, and the light was not quite gone; but still it was geyan dark, and the place sprang somewhat suddenly on my sight. For, looking a little to the left, I saw over a little strip of grass a big square dwelling with many outhouses, half farm and half pleasure-house. This, I thought, is the verra place I have been seeking and made sure of finding; so whistling a gay tune, I drove my flock toward it.

"When

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"When I came to the gate of the court, I saw better of what sort was the building I had arrived at. There was a square yard with monstrous high walls, at the left of which was the main block of the house, and on the right what I took to be the byres and stables. The place looked ancient, and the stone in many places was crumbling away; but the style was of yesterday and in no way differing from that of a hundred steadings in the land. There were some kind of arms above the gateway, and a bit of an iron stanchion; and when I had my sheep inside of it, I saw that the court was all grown up with green grass. And what seemed queer in that dusky half-light was the want of sound. There was no neichering of horses, nor routing of kye, nor clack of hens, but all as still as the top of Ben Cruachan. It was warm and pleasant, too, though the night was chill without.

"I had no sooner entered the place than a row of sheep-pens caught my eye, fixed against the wall in front. This I thought mighty convenient, so I made all haste to put my beasts into them; and finding that there was a good supply of hay within, I leff them easy in my mind, and turned about to look for the door of the house.

"To my wonder, when I found it, it was open wide to the wall; so, being confident with much whisky, I never took thought to knock, but walked boldly in. There's some careless folk here, thinks I to myself, and I much misdoubt if the man knows aught about farming. He'll maybe just be a town's body taking the air on the muirs.

"The place I entered upon was a hall, not like a muirland farm-house, but more fine than I had ever seen. It was laid with a verra fine carpet, all red and blue and gay colours, and in the corner in a fireplace a great fire crackled. There were chairs, too, and a walth of old rusty arms on the walls, and all manner of whigmaleeries

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whigmaleeries that folk think ornamental. But nobody was there, so I made for the staircase which was at the further side, and went up it stoutly. I made scarce any noise so thickly was it carpeted, and I will own it kind of terrified me to be walking in such a place. But when a man has drunk well he is troubled not overmuckle with modesty or fear, so I e'en stepped out and soon came to a landing where was a door.

"Now, thinks I, at last I have won to the habitable parts of the house; so laying my finger on the sneck I lifted it and entered. And there before me was the finest room in all the world; indeed I abate not a jot of the phrase, for I cannot think of anything finer. It was hung with braw pictures and lined with big bookcases of oak well-filled with books in fine bindings. The furnishing seemed carved by a skilled hand, and the cushions and curtains were soft velvet. But the best thing was the table, which was covered with a clean white cloth and set with all kind of good meat and drink. The dishes were of silver and as bright as Loch Awe water in an April sun. Eh, but it was a braw braw sight for a drover! And there at the far end, with a great pottle of wine before him, sat the master.

"He rose as I entered, and I saw him to be dressed in the pink of town fashion, a man of maybe fifty years, but hale and well-looking, with a peaked beard and trimmed moustache and thick eyebrows. His eyes were slanted a thought, which is a thing I hate in any man, but his whole appearance was pleasing.

"'Mr. Stewart?' says he courteously, looking at me. 'Is it Mr. Duncan Stewart that I will be indebted to for the honour of this visit?'

"I stared at him blankly, for how did he ken my name?

"'That is my name,' I said, 'but who the tevil tell't you about it?'

"'Oh,

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"'Oh, my name is Stewart myself,' says he, 'and all Stewarts should be well acquaint.'

"'True,' said I, 'though I don't mind your face before. But now I am here, I think you have a most gallant place, Mr. Stewart.'

"'Well enough. But how have you come to't? We've few visitors.'

"So I told him where I had come from, and where I was going, and why I was forwandered at this time of night among the muirs. He listened keenly, and when I had finished, he says verra friendly-like, 'Then you'll bide all night and take supper with me. It would never be doing to let one of the clan go away without breaking bread. Sit ye down, Mr. Duncan.'

"I sat down gladly enough, though I own that at first I did not half-like the whole business. There was something unchristian about the place, and for certain it was not seemly that the man's name should be the same as my own, and that he should be so well posted in my doings. But he seemed so well-disposed that my misgivings soon vanished.

"So I seated myself at the table opposite my entertainer. There was a place laid ready for me, and beside the knife and fork a long horn-handled spoon. I had never seen a spoon so long and queer, and I asked the man what it meant. 'Oh,' says he, 'the broth in this house is very often hot, so we need a long spoon to sup it. It is a common enough thing, is it not?'

"I could answer nothing to this, though it did not seem to me sense, and I had an inkling of something I had heard about long spoons which I thought was not good; but my wits were not clear, as I have told you already. A serving man brought me a great bowl of soup and set it before me. I had hardly plunged spoon intil it, when Mr. Stewart cries out from the other end: 'Now,

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'Now, Mr. Duncan, I call you to witness that you sit down to supper of your own accord. I've an ill name in these parts for compelling folk to take meat with me when they dinna want it. But you'll bear me witness that you're willing.'

"'Yes, by God, I am that,' I said, for the savoury smell of the broth was rising to my nostrils. The other smiled at this as if well-pleased.

"I have tasted many soups, but I swear there never was one like that. It was as if all the good things in the world were mixed thegether—whisky and kale and shortbread and cocky-leeky and honey and salmon. The taste of it was enough to make a body's heart loup with fair gratitude. The smell of it was like the spicy winds of Arabia, that you read about in the Bible, and when you had taken a spoonful you felt as happy as if you had sellt a hundred yowes at twice their reasonable worth. Oh, it was grand soup!

"'What Stewarts did you say you comed from,' I asked my entertainer.

"'Oh,' he says, 'I'm connected with them all, Athole Stewarts, Appin Stewarts, Rannoch Stewarts; and a' I've a heap o' land thereaways.'

"'Whereabouts?' says I, wondering. 'Is't at the Blair o' Athole, or along by Tummel side, or wast the Loch o' Rannoch, or on the Muir, or in Mamore?'

"'In all the places you name,' says he.

"'Got damn,' says I, 'then what for do you not bide there instead of in these stinking lawlands?'

"At this he laughed softly to himself. 'Why, for maybe the same reason as yoursel, Mr. Duncan. You know the proverb, "A' Stewarts are sib to the Deil."'

"I laughed loudly; 'Oh, you've been a wild one, too, have you? Then you're not worse than mysel. I ken the inside of every public

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public in the Cowgate and Cannongate, and there's no another drover on the road my match at fechting and drinking and dicing.' And I started on a long shameless catalogue of my misdeeds. Mr. Stewart meantime listened with a satisfied smirk on his face.

"'Yes, I've heard tell of you, Mr. Duncan,' he says. 'But here's something more, and you'll doubtless be hungry.'

"And now there was set on the table a round of beef garnished with pot-herbs, all most delicately fine to the taste. From a great cupboard were brought many bottles of wine, and in a massive silver bowl at the table's head were put whisky and lemons and sugar. I do not know well what I drank, but whatever it might be it was the best ever brewed. It made you scarce feel the earth round about you, and you were so happy you could scarce keep from singing. I wad give much siller to this day for the receipt.

"Now, the wine made me talk, and I began to boast of my own great qualities, the things I had done and the things I was going to do. I was a drover just now, but it was not long that I would be being a drover. I had bought a flock of my own, and would sell it for a hundred pounds, no less; with that I would buy a bigger one till I had made money enough to stock a farm; and then I would leave the road and spend my days in peace, seeing to my land and living in good company. Was not my father, I cried, own cousin, thrice removed, to the Macleans o' Duart, and my mother's uncle's wife a Rory of Balnacrory? And I am a scholar too, said I, for I was a matter of two years at Embro' College, and might have been roaring in the pulpit, if I hadna liked the drink and the lassies too well.

"'See,' said I, 'I will prove it to you;' and I rose from the table and went to one of the bookcases. There were all manner of books, Latin and Greek, poets and philosophers, but in the main, divinity.

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divinity. For there I saw Richard Baxter's 'Call to the Unconverted,' and Thomas Boston of Ettrick's 'Fourfold State,' not to speak of the *Sermons* of half a hundred auld ministers, and the 'Hind let Loose,' and many books of the covenanting folk.

"'Faith,' I says, 'you've a fine collection, Mr. What's-your-name,' for the wine had made me free in my talk. 'There is many a minister and professor in the Kirk, I'll warrant, who has a less godly library. I begin to suspect you of piety, sir.'

"'Does it not behoove us,' he answered in an unctuous voice, 'to mind the words of Holy Writ that evil communications corrupt good manners, and have an eye to our company? These are all the company I have, except when some stranger such as you honours me with a visit.'

"I had meantime been opening a book of plays, I think by the famous William Shakespeare, and I here proke into a loud laugh. 'Ha, ha, Mr. Stewart,' I says, 'here's a sentence I've lighted on which is hard on you. Listen! 'The Devil can quote Scripture to advantage.'

"The other laughed long. 'He who wrote that was a shrewd man,' he said, 'but I'll warrant if you'll open another volume, you'll find some quip on yourself.'

"I did as I was bidden, and picked up a white-backed book, and opening it at random, read: 'There be many who spend their days in evil and wine-bibbing, in lusting and cheating, who think to mend while yet there is time; but the opportunity is to them for ever awanting, and they go down open-mouthed to the great fire.'

"'Psa,' I cried, 'some wretched preaching book, I will have none of them. Good wine will be better than bad theology.' So I sat down once more at the table.

"'You're a clever man, Mr. Duncan,' he says, 'and a well-read

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read one. I commend your spirit in breaking away from the bands of the kirk and the college, though your father was so thrawn against you.'

"'Enough of that,' I said, 'though I don't know who telled you;' I was angry to hear my father spoken of, as though the grieving him was a thing to be proud of.

"'Oh, as you please,' he says; 'I was just going to say that I commended your spirit in sticking the knife into the man in the Pleasaunce, the time you had to hide for a month about the backs o' Leith.'

"'How do you ken that,' I asked hotly, 'you've heard more about me than ought to be repeated, let me tell you.'

"'Don't be angry,' he said sweetly; 'I like you well for these things, and you mind the lassie in Athole that was so fond of you. You treated her well, did you not?'

"I made no answer, being too much surprised at his knowledge of things which I thought none knew but myself.

"'Oh yes, Mr. Duncan. I could tell you what you were doing to-day, how you cheated Jock Gallowa out of six pounds, and sold a horse to the farmer of Haypath that was scarce fit to carry him home. And I know what you are meaning to do the morn at Glesca, and I wish you well of it.'

"'I think you must be the Devil,' I said blankly.

"'The same, at your service,' said he, still smiling.

"I looked at him in terror, and even as I looked I kenned by something in his eyes and the twitch of his lips that he was speaking the truth.

"'And what place is this, you ' I stammered.

"'Call me Mr. S.,' he says gently, 'and enjoy your stay while you are here and don't concern yourself about the lawing.'

"'The

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"'The lawing!' I cried in astonishment, 'and is this a house of public entertainment?'

"'To be sure, else how is a poor man to live?'

"'Name it,' said I, 'and I will pay and be gone.'

"'Well,' said he, 'I make it a habit to give a man his choice. In your case it will be your wealth or your chances hereafter, in plain English your flock or your ——'

"'My immortal soul,' I gasped.

"'Your soul,' said Mr. S., bowing, 'though I think you call it by too flattering an adjective.'

"'You damned thief,' I roared, 'you would entice a man into your accursed house and then strip him bare.'

"'Hold hard,' said he, 'don't let us spoil our good fellowship by incivilities. And, mind you, I took you to witness to begin with that you sat down of your own accord.'

"'So you did,' said I, and could say no more.

"'Come, come,' he says, 'don't take it so bad. You may keep all your gear and yet part from here in safety. You've but to sign your name, which is no hard task to a college-bred man, and go on living as you live just now to the end. And let me tell you, Mr. Duncan Stewart, that you should take it as a great obligement that I am willing to take your bit soul instead of fifty sheep. There's no many would value it so high.'

"'Maybe no, maybe no,' I said sadly, 'but it's all I have. D'ye no see that if I gave it up, there would be no chance left of mending? And I'm sure I do not want your company to all eternity.'

"'Faith, that's uncivil,' he says; 'I was just about to say that we had had a very pleasant evening.'

"I sat back in my chair very down-hearted. I must leave this place as poor as a kirk-mouse, and begin again with little but the clothes

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clothes on my back. I was strongly tempted to sign the bit paper thing and have done with it all, but somehow I could not bring myself to do it. So at last I says to him: 'Well, I've made up my mind. I'll give you my sheep, sorry though I be to lose them, and I hope I may never come near this place again as long as I live.'

"'On the contrary,' he said, 'I hope often to have the pleasure of your company. And seeing that you've paid well for your lodging, I hope you'll make the best of it. Don't be sparing on the drink.'

"'I looked hard at him for a second. 'You've an ill name, and an ill trade, but you're no a bad sort yoursel, and, do you ken, I like you.'

"'I'm much obliged to you for the character,' says he, 'and I'll take your hand on't.'

"So I filled up my glass and we set to, and such an evening I never mind of. We never got fou, but just in a fine good temper and very entertaining. The stories we telled and the jokes we cracked are still a kind of memory with me, though I could not come over one of them. And then, when I got sleepy, I was shown to the brawest bedroom, all hung with pictures and looking-glasses, and with bed-clothes of the finest linen and a coverlet of silk. I bade Mr. S. good-night, and my head was scarce on the pillow ere I was sound asleep.

* * * * *

"When I awoke the sun was just newly risen, and the frost of a September morning was on my clothes. I was lying among green braes with nothing near me but crying whaups and heathery hills, and my two dogs running round about and howling as they were mad."

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Tristram and Iseult

By Bernard Sleigh

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A Guardian of the Poor

By T. Baron Russell

I

BORLASE AND COMPANY did not aspire, like certain other drapers in the Southern Suburbs, to be universal providers. Neither did they seek, otherwise than passively, to rival these powerful neighbours in the esteem of villadom and the superior order of suburban society. The wares that changed hands across Borlase's many counters were modestly content to assimilate, at a respectful interval, those examples of last year's mode which found their way to the more ambitious emporia, where they were exhibited to the wives and daughters of retired tradesmen and head-clerks, as Parisian innovations, almost sinfully novel. The raw material of feminine adornment was what Borlase and Company dealt in, uncostly chiffons and faced ribbons, which with the *Penny Dressmaker* and the *Amateur Bonnet Journal* to aid, produced under deft hands a sort of jerry-built finery, whose characteristic a sensitive instinct might divine, in a sympathetic glance, from the "groves" of dingy two-storeyed houses, which sent forth their hundreds a-Saturday's to Borlase's shop. The possibilities latent in shoddy (or débris of old cloth) and of cotton warps in a fabric guaranteed "all wool," and so demonstrated to unconfiding customers,

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customers, on a triumphant withdrawal of weft by Mr. Borlase, had been deeply explored by the mercers who supplied him; for the acts of Parliament which forbid adulteration do not apply to wares otherwise than edible, and the later statute against fraudulent misdescription is beneficently evasible, as having no particular officer to set it in motion. Thus, "full-fashioned" stockings, owing their form to judicious blocking after manufacture, and double-width calicoes at four pence three farthings, which yield on agitation a rich dressing of clay-like powder, are quite securely vendible, without danger to the repute of the retailer as a pillar of society and a local vestryman.

Since you cannot be a vestryman and a guardian of the poor, even in the suburbs, for nothing, it is to be gathered that Mr. Borlase—the sole constituent of Borlase and Company—went not unrewarded, even in this world's corruptible profit, for the benefits which he bestowed on society. It was his pride to be referred to as the cheapest draper in the neighbourhood. You could purchase at his shop, on astonishingly economical terms, goods which only a very acute and highly trained perception could distinguish at sight from others, which, in less favoured markets, were priced at twice those rates, an advantage secured by the frequent conferences of Borlase and Company with hungry looking German wholesalers in Jewin Street and other recondite thoroughfares of the E.C. district.

The purchasing capacity in the individual, among Mr. Borlase's clientage, being small, it follows that the number of his transactions, to be lucrative, must be also large. Hence the sixty-odd "young people" ("who," as a local paper worded it "constituted the *personnel* of Messrs. Borlase and Co's staff") had all their work cut out for them on a Saturday night. But practice, and the consciousness that lapse or error entailed fines not conveniently spared

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spared from scanty wages, soon taught new-comers the art of managing two customers at a time, and four on Saturday. Thus the crowded shop full of buyers was kept pretty constantly on the move, even at the busiest of times. Lest any should go empty away, Borlase and Company in person—pompous, full-fed, and evaporating venality at every pore—mingled with his patrons near the exit; and woe to the shop girl who had failed to cajole her customer! This duty of shop-walking Mr. Borlase divided at busy times with a lean man, grey-headed and stooping at the shoulders, who rubbed lank hands together when addressed by a customer (he never ventured to accost one, in the Borlasian manner) and was summoned quickly from counter to counter to "sign." From Monday to Friday he docketed invoices, checked sales-books, and drudged through the other routine of account-keeping, day by day; on Saturday, from two o'clock onward, he relieved his proprietor of the duty of initialling bills, so that the latter might stand guard at the door. He picked up the arrears of his afternoon work after the shop closed at eleven-thirty.

Alone, of all Borlase and Company's people, he slept at home, living at a house in Denmark Street, near the back of the shop. He had grown to the lean, grey pantaloon he was, in Borlase and Company's service, and rising to a proud stipend of two pounds a week, had taken to his arms the faded little wife who had waited for him. His position was deemed one of the plums of the establishment.

On an afternoon, early in January, the eyes of this John Hunt strayed often to the clock. Not that he longed for tea-time: had it not been Saturday he might have wished for five o'clock to come round, but on Saturdays he was not allowed to go home, but shared the bounty of Borlase and Company with the twenty-four young men and twenty-nine "young persons" of the counters. He

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knew very well that to-day there could be no hurried home-going; and however he might weary to assure himself that all was well in the shabby little six-roomed house, where the shabby little wife was moving about her work, not quite so actively as usual, he must await, with what patience he might, the end of the day's work. And having an occasion for anxiety, he found the hours, busy as they were, long in passing. There was a little more work during the half hour which the assistants divided among them, in thirds, for tea. Customers were many, and with the best will in the world to keep them in hand, the men and girls had to bear frequent complaints from impatient buyers, and Hunt, hurrying at the call of "sign"—he had no other name in the shop—was summoned hither and thither to stay the departure of patrons who "really couldn't wait about any longer." To suffer a customer to go away unsupplied was the cardinal sin at Borlase's: "getting the swop" the young people called it. The rule of the place required that, on this emergency threatening, Mr. Borlase, or the temporary shop walker, must be called in. Three "swops" involved "the sack"; every one knew that: and it is wonderful what patience that knowledge imparted to the assistants at the various counters.

The grand rush of the week, however, came after tea on Saturday evening, when the shop grew hot and gassy even in January, and a vague odour of damp umbrellas pervaded everything. Customers waited, row upon row. It was not easy to move among them: and to keep them good humoured required endless resource and tact. The day's meridian was at nine o'clock. After that, the tide of purchasers would slacken, by degrees, until closing time. The night was inclement, but as the critical opportunity of Sunday morning chapel would soon be at hand, the rain could not keep folk at home. On one side of the door, the shop-window

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shop-window was dull with drops. By some oversight, the grating overhead had not been opened on this side to let the steam out. Every one in the shop was damp, cross, and sticky at the fingers.

A stout inhabitant entered at ten, and spent a happy hour inspecting the entire stock of bonnet ribbons. She decided a dozen times on this or that: a dozen times she altered her mind, at the reflection that each colour of the solar spectrum failed to suit "her style." No, nothing would do. She must go somewhere else, that was all; if the young lady hadn't got what she wanted, it was no use of the young lady for to try for to put her off with something else. It was all very well, she added, to say they had shown her everything. If it was too much trouble to get it down (here the rotund lady raised her voice), why, better say so at once.

"Sign!" said the shop girl, wearily.

"What is it, Miss?"

"Lady wishes for a dark 'eliotrope ribbon, shot with cerise." (Such atrocities were common at Borlase's.)

"Well, haven't you shown the lady——?"

"We haven't the width." Hunt vainly endeavoured to still the rising storm: the customer was inexorable. No, she would go; it was quite plain they didn't *mean* to serve her; she had been kept waiting——"

"Very sorry we cannot suit you, Madam, now; but we shall be having some new ribbons in on Monday." The outraged dame departed.

At the door she encountered the swift eye of Borlase and Company, which at once detected something wrong. No, she was *not* suited. Mr. Borlase was quite sure if—— No, they had admitted they hadn't got it; it was no good wasting any more of her time. She would just be off.

"May

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"May I ask who said that we were out of stock?" Mr. Borlase asked. The tone was suave, but the look dangerous.

"The young person at the counter said so; so did that shabby-looking man that signs the bills," he was answered. Mr. Borlase looked more dangerous still.

By this time the shutters were being put up by the junior assistants, the collars of their black coats turned up to keep off a little of the fine rain. Only the side door remained open, and a man stood by it to let the customers out, one by one. Hunt had slipped off to his desk and was already rapidly adding up counter-foils, before the lights were put out in the shop. Mr. Borlase rolled pompously into the little office about this time, and began to pay the staff, who were waiting, in a long *queue*, to file past him. He recited in the tone of a patron the pay of each assistant, as he shoved it through the little cash window, distracting Hunt's calculations horribly.

The latter was working rapidly. It was not easy to keep his mind on the figures. He was tired and anxious; as the time for going home came nearer, he grew even excited. Finally, the last book was made up, and the grand total, verified by comparison with the till, happily "came out" right. Mr. Borlase, who had lit a cigar, laid it cautiously down, and checked the money. Then he gave Hunt his forty shillings, and the drudge, buttoning up his shabby frockcoat, prepared to go. This operation attracting Mr. Borlase's attention, recalled the words of the angry customer. He called Hunt back and surveyed him coldly. The coat was faded and shiny. It dragged in creases at the buttonholes, and the buttons showed an edge of metal, where the cloth covering had worn out. The braid down the front was threadbare, and showed grey in places. Certainly his shop-walker was inexcusably shabby.

"How is it that your coat is so unsightly, Hunt?" Mr. Borlase

at

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at length demanded, querulously. "It's a disgrace to my establishment, and customers remark upon it. Just look to it that you make yourself presentable. I can't have a scarecrow walking my shop; it reflects upon me—upon me, mind you!"

Hunt murmured something to the effect that the coat certainly *was* rather old; but his master interrupted him impatiently. "Old," he said; "of course it's old—much too old. If you can't dress yourself properly, I shall find some one who can. And, Hunt," he added, reminiscently, "another thing. I've once or twice noticed on week-days that you smell of tobacco—shag tobacco. That's another thing I must have mended. I can't have my customers disgusted by your filthy habits. Look to that also;" and he turned away, leaving Hunt to shuffle off homeward under an inefficient umbrella.

II

Hunt paused on the doorstep of the little house in Denmark Street, and looked up, anxiously, at the first-floor window. All dark—and, so far, so good. He opened the door noiselessly with a latch-key and listened. Everything was quiet. The little wife had gone to bed then, and he made his way on tiptoe to the kitchen, lit a paraffin lamp, spread the discreditable coat wide open on two nails, that it might dry, and put on his slippers. A scratching at the back door, mingled with faint whines, made him step quickly across the kitchen, to admit a mongrel fox-terrier. "What, Joey!" he cried, in the high-pitched voice which some men use to dogs and children—"What, Joey! What the little bow-wow—didn't they let you in?" He sat down as the animal frisked around him, jumping at last into his lap, to lick his face, and

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and nuzzle its cold nose against his neck, while he pulled its ears caressingly and tried to look into the eager, welcoming eyes. To a man humbled, lonely, and as yet childless, the demonstrative admiration of the dog was precious: this one living thing, and the tired woman upstairs, looked up to him, and he could not spare even the dog's homage.

Presently he turned to the deal table—spotless, and scrubbed until the harder fibres of the wood stood out in ridges where the softer parts had worn away. On one corner a piece of coarse tablecloth, oft darned, had been spread and turned over, to cover something that lay under it. He turned it back and began to eat his supper of bread and cheese, cutting off snips of rind to throw to the dog, sitting alert on its haunches with anticipatory wags. Supper finished, Hunt took his money, in a dirty canvas bag, from his pocket, and laid it out on the table. Seven shillings for the rent, three shillings to complete the guinea that was hoarding for a certain other purpose; that left thirty shillings. Two shillings for his own pocket; eighteen shillings, Mary's housekeeping money; two shillings for the old mother who lived down in Camberwell, to be near the workhouse, whence came a small weekly relief that helped to keep her. Eight shillings over: John thought he knew of a shop where a second-hand frockcoat (his strict official costume as shop-walker) was offered for ten shillings, but might be compassed, with discretion, for eight. He gathered up the money, and looked wistfully at the tin tobacco-box on the dresser shelf.

No; it was empty, he remembered. He had not been able to save the threepence halfpenny this week. Still—there might be a few grains of dust in it. He took down a blackened clay pipe, ran his little finger round the bowl, and shook the box tentatively. Something rustled within; he put his thumb nail to the lid. Half an

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an ounce of shag screwed up in paper! So the little wife had thought of him, and prepared this surprise. Dear girl. The old man's eyes moistened—he *was* an old man, though only forty by the calendar—as he unwrapped the tobacco, carefully shaking particles of the dust from folds in the paper, and filled himself half a pipe. Then he smoked, fingering the dog's ears reflectively and mentally adding up afresh his scanty moneys. Certainly it was good that he should be able to put by the three shillings this Saturday: that guinea might be wanted, any day; and after that there would be at least half-a-crown a week, and beer-money, needed for the charwoman who was to "do for" the missus and give an eye to the house, presently.

III

When he blew out the lamp, and crept, slippers in hand, upstairs, he was shivering a little. He stood a moment outside the bedroom door and lit a match for the candle, to avoid disturbing the sleeping wife. He undressed very quietly; but the woman moved at some slight sound, and sat up at once on seeing him, smiling, and holding out her arms. He put them down very gently.

"Careful, dearie," he said; "careful, you know," and took her head in his arm. "How have you been?"

"Oh, very bobbish. So you found the bit o' smoke?"—his breath being her informant.

"Yes, dear. But you oughtn't to scrape——"

She put her hand over his mouth. "Hush," she said, "you old stupid. I couldn't let you go without the only little bit of comfort. But look here," she added gravely; "look what's come."

She

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She drew a folded buff paper from under the pillow. She had brought it upstairs in her hand, that the sight of it might not vex him before supper. It was a printed circular from the local police station, remarking that Mr. Hunt had taken out a license to keep one dog the year before, but had not renewed it this year at its expiration. If Mr. Hunt had now ceased to keep one dog, the circular politely concluded, this notice might be disregarded.

He looked blank. Seven-and-sixpence for Joey. The little doggy never appeared in the light of an extravagance except at license-time; he was an economical quadruped, subsisting on the scraps, and such treasure-trove as he could pick up in the gutter. But the notice meant good-bye to the frock-coat, for the present week at least; and Hunt knew that it might be long enough before he had eight shillings in his pocket again.

He brightened up, however, before the little woman had time to remark his depression.

"All right," he said, cheerfully, "I've got seven-and-six over, old girl. I'll go round to the post office and get the license, first thing on Monday morning."

"You'd better let me get it; you'll be late if you go yourself. I can just as well pop round, in the morning."

"Oh, I don't like you to go out any more than you're obliged to. I'll start a little earlier. I dare say Miss King 'll be in the shop."

The idea of discarding the dog never for an instant occurred to either.

In the morning—Sunday—John slipped early out of bed, lit the fire below stairs, and was at his wife's beside with a cup of tea when she awoke. In the meantime, he had been to a near chemist's, where a painted tin plate proclaimed that medicines could be obtained on the Sabbath by ringing the bell, and procured

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cured a pennyworth of ammonia—he called it "ahmonia"—from the grumbling apprentice. Then, laying the despised coat on the kitchen table, he had carefully brushed it, rubbed the pungent fluid into the cloth with a rag, and brushed yet again. Afterwards, using the handle of a pen, he inked the thread-bare places and the frayed buttonholes, spread the condemned garment on a clothes-line that the smell of the ammonia might evaporate, and stretched the sleeves and pulled the lappels, as well as he could, into better shape. This had been, in its time, a Sunday coat, purchased not secondhand but *new*, in some moment of temporary prosperity, though he had been obliged to depose it to every day wear long since, and had never replaced it. This half hour's work would give it a fresh lease of life, he reflected, as he stepped back to contemplate the effect—if only the buttons didn't happen to catch Borlase and Company's eye. And later on, he would manage to get another.

IV

Monday morning was a slack time at Borlase's—a time devoted to putting in order stock which had been disturbed on Saturday night, and which was allowed, perforce, to be put away hurriedly in the hey-day of harvest. Ribbons had to be re-rolled in their paper interlining, and neatly secured with tiny pins. Calicoes had to be refolded in tighter bales: hat trimmings and artificial flowers to be dusted with a sort of overgrown paint-brush, and laid carefully in their shiny black boxes. A general overhauling of wares, in short, had to be done, in the intervals of serving a few early callers, until, after dinner, the ladies of the suburb began to arrive, and the shop to assume its afternoon bustle. John checked invoices, entered up the bought ledger, and verified the charges of city

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city warehousemen for goods newly delivered, crossing the narrow deep shop to reach the warehouse behind in search of various consignments, which needed to be "passed" as correct and entered in the stock book, before being placed on the shelves for sale. Mr. Borlase was "signing" in the shop, as usual: this duty only devolved upon Hunt on the busy night of the seventh day.

Presently he detected an error in a piece of dress stuff, and drew his principal, by the eye, into the corner where it lay.

"Schweitzer and Brunn invoice this as three dozen and five," he said, "It's marked five dozen and three on the cover."

"Well, which is it?"

"Five three, I should think, sir. The mistake's more likely to be in the bill than in the goods."

"Well, take it out and measure it, can't you."

"Very good, sir," Hunt replied. As he shuffled off, Mr. Borlase eyed his round shoulders and shining elbows with disapprobation. In the afternoon light, Hunt looked shabbier than ever. Customers would get the idea that he was underpaid. This must be looked to.

In a little while Hunt sought the master's eye again. "It's five dozen and three, right enough," he said: "five three, good measure. Will you have it cut, or send for a corrected invoice?"

Mr. Borlase glared. "*You've* nothing to do with the measure," he said, sharply: "what's it to do with you? All *you've* got to do is to see that it holds three dozen and five: stop there. I can't keep my books and Schweitzer's too. Mark it 'query over' in the Stock Book. Haven't you got enough to fill your time without wasting it on other people's blunders as well as your own?"

"And, Hunt," he added, sternly, "what about that coat of yours?

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yours? I told you on Saturday it wouldn't do. Why haven't you come in a better one?"

"I haven't got a better one, sir," Hunt faltered.

"You—haven't—got—a better one, sir," Borlase replied mocking him. "Then why the devil haven't you bought yourself a better one, sir?"

Hunt answered that there hadn't been time: and besides, he had not the money.

"You haven't the money? What do you mean by 'you haven't the money?' Weren't you paid on Saturday? 'Yes you know'—but yes, you don't know"—the temper of Borlase and Company rose, or was affected to rise, higher: "But yes, you don't know," said the outraged draper, "that you disgrace my shop."

"I'm very sorry, sir: I shall try what I can do next Saturday: but I have a good many expenses just now; and I've had the dog license to pay this morning, and my wife——"

"Dog license? What do you want with dog licenses? What do you want with dogs? Put the brute in a bucket of water—that's the way to pay dog licenses! Why—the coat's absolutely falling to pieces: look at the braid, look at the elbows." Mr. Borlase in his wrath, seized one of the lappels in his finger, and gave it a pull. The worn braid, accustomed to more tender usage, yielded and ripped a foot or more down the front, showing the frayed edges beneath.

The situation was plainly impossible. On the one hand, Hunt could not be made to buy himself new clothes if he had no money. On the other, he was as plainly an eyesore in the present coat—and Mr. Borlase had by his own act destroyed it. He was a man of quick decisions. "Come with me," he said. "Mr. Peters! Take the floor please," and he pushed Hunt by the elbow to the staircase which led to the upper storeys.

The

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The first floor was occupied by Mr. Borlase and his family. At the end of a corridor was a wide hanging-cupboard, with sliding doors. Searching in this, Mr. Borlase found a long-discarded frock-coat of his own. "Put that on," he said sternly. "And don't let me see you disgracing my shop any more. How many men do you think would take the coat off their own backs to clothe you?"

Hunt broke into thanks: it is likely that this simple fellow was actually grateful for the thing thus flung to him. He walked homeward buoyantly at tea time, full of excitement and eager to show this great acquisition to Mary.

But something chilled him as he opened the door. Mary would have been in the passage at the first sound of his latch-key, ordinarily. The place was empty, now, and a strange hat hung on a walking-stick leaning against the casing of the parlour door.

So the hour had come, and the guinea was wanted already! He ran hurriedly upstairs to the bedroom. The doctor pushed him from the door, and came out on the landing with him. "You can't come in, just yet," he said.

"When was she 'taken'?" John asked.

"About two o'clock, I understand. The woman happened to be with her, and has just fetched me."

"How long——"

"Oh, an hour more yet I expect. All very nicely: no cause for alarm. Just keep quiet, and don't disturb her, there's a good fellow: it's all you can do."

He pushed the reluctant John to the stair-head and re-entered the bedroom with a quick movement. Hunt crept downstairs, and choked over his tea: then rushed back to the shop. He had brought the old coat on his arm, and laid it carefully over the stair-railing. It could still be mended, and would do for house wear.

He

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He made several mistakes that night: but as this concerned only himself (who had to ferret out and rectify them) it had no other effect than to keep him a little later than nine o'clock before he could leave. He ran home, and arrived panting. The frowsy charwoman met him in the passage.

"There, it's a good job you've come," she said. "She's been a-askin' for you. It's a boy. You can come up and speak to her, a minute, but you mustn't stop long. She's got to have her sleep. Then you can go and get me my beer. There isn't a drop in the 'ouse."

Mary only lifted her eyes when he pressed his lips to her damp brow. She did not speak.

"Let me see him," he whispered.

She turned back a corner of the quilt, where a shapeless face, inconceivably small, inconceivably red, lay on her arms. John stooped and kissed the scant, silky, black hair. The child threw up a tiny open hand, seizing the finger with which he touched it. A great emotion mastered and silenced him, and he stooped to kiss the baby finger-nails. Mary smiled again and closed her eyes.

V

Hunt fared irregularly during the next few days. His work, as it happened, was rather heavy—heavier than usual—and the accident saved him some anxious thoughts, for full hours are short hours. Every now and then, though, as he moved on some errand of his labour, came a new experience—the joy of sudden recollection. There was a baby! The remembrance gave him a fresh thrill of happiness each time that it recurred. An hour, each night, he sat alone with his wife in the bed-room, gazing silently at

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at the little head, just hidden by the flannel it was wrapped in. They dared not speak, lest the child should rouse—and indeed, Mary was hardly strong enough to talk yet, though she described herself, in a whisper, as "getting on famous."

The charwoman departed early in each evening, now, and John slept, secretly, on the landing, that he might hear his wife's call, if she should need him in the night. He was supposed to lie on a couch in that mathematical-looking parlour, the use of which was so rigidly confined to Sunday afternoons: but this was a myth, loyally concealed by the charwoman, who was spared the trouble of a bed-making by the inscrutable whim of her patient's husband. He caught a severe cold in the process, which was not surprising.

Mary's progress did not satisfy the doctor. Ten days showed little or no recovery of strength. He ordered beef tea, and John provided it. But no success attended this time-honoured prescription. Possibly it was not skillfully prepared: anyway the patient grew worse. On Wednesday at dinner time, John found the doctor waiting for him. "I don't like the looks of your wife, Mr. Hunt," he said, bluntly. "She isn't picking up as fast as we should wish. I should like her to have some beef essence—a small quantity, every two hours."

"What, Liebig?" asked John.

"No, no, not Liebig: *essence*, not extract. It is a kind of jelly. You get it at the chemists: lot of nourishment in a small space—very easily assimilated, you know."

John didn't know, but he neglected his dinner and hurried to the drug stores. "Fifteen pence," said the man at the counter; and John's heart sank at the smallness of the tin that was handed him. On his return he met the landlord, demanding the rent. Three more visits to the chemists, at one and threepence, left him, by Thursday night, with an empty pocket; and there was only enough

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enough food in the house for the charwoman's meals next day. At noon on Friday he found the doctor in the house again.

"She has had no beef to-day I find," said the man of science in reply to John's interrogative look. "And she is sinking, besides. She must have a teaspoonful of brandy every two hours, as well as the essence: if you can, give her a few grapes." He hurried off before John could recover his self-possession: for many shilling visits must be comprised in a day, by the small general practitioner who would make a living in Camberwell.

John sat down on the stairs in blank misery. He had not a farthing; and Mary was upstairs—perhaps—perhaps dying! He leaned on the wall for support—being weak with hunger himself—and his hat fell off. This reminded him that he was sitting on his coat tails, which would be creased, and he rose, unsteadily. The coat! It was his only removable asset; and Mary was dying. They had never used the pawnshop; but the coat had been a good one, and would certainly fetch a loan—half a sovereign, perhaps, thought the inexperienced John. He went into the kitchen, took down his old coat from its nail, and with needle and cotton hastily repaired the torn binding. Then he ran to the pawnbrokers, whence he emerged, after an interval rich in contumely, with three shillings (less a penny for the ticket) extracted with difficulty from the scornful Hebrew in the little box. But two and elevenpence produced two tins of beef, half a quartern of brandy, and a half-penny roll; the situation, for the moment, was saved.

He was late at the shop and was rebuked for it. Mr. Borlase had been awaiting him, having an official appointment to keep. He had to meet his fellow Guardians and the Watch Committee.

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VI

Mrs. Hunt had rallied a little by night fall, and was reported "decidedly better" by the doctor next morning. John began to be more hopeful; and he had breakfasted, also, the charwoman having brought in a loaf.

After dinner-time John took up his duties (this being Saturday) as shop walker, privately resolving to make the most of tea at Borlase's. Presently the customary rush of business set in, absorbing all his attention. He did not see that Mr. Borlase was eyeing him with a puzzled air, as if he missed something. He did not see either that the fat woman who had gone empty away a fortnight since, entered the shop, and that the sight of her woke up a sudden recollection in his proprietor, who looked over her substantial shoulders at John with a highly unfriendly eye.

VII

A few hours later, he was at home, in the bare kitchen—his chin resting on one hand and his vacant glance fixed on the window opposite.

He had sat there an hour—his mind blank, save for the one dull impression of misery. The detail of his trouble was absent from his thoughts: only the dull, aching consequence of it remained.

Mr. Borlase has paid the assistants as usual, checked the cash and received the accounts in silence. But when the shop was empty and dark he had turned upon Hunt in fury.

"What the devil do you mean, by turning up on a Saturday again, in those scarecrow clothes?" he had asked. "Eh? What the

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the hell do you mean by it? Didn't I take my coat off my own back to give you, eh? And you, you ungrateful hound, you come to me that figure, to disgrace me! What do you mean by it? Where's my coat?"

"I'm very sorry, sir, I shall have it——"

"Where's my coat, I ask you?"

"If you'll let me explain, sir, I——you see my wife——"

"Where's my coat?"

"I was about to explain, sir. I——"

"Where's my coat?"

"I—I've put it away sir: I have pledged it."

Mr. Borlase staggered.

"You pledged it! You pledged *my coat!* You——"

"My wife was dying, sir: and I had to get——"

"You pledged my coat! The coat I *gave* you! . . . Not a word! Not a word! You have stolen my coat. That is what it amounts to. I've a great mind to give you into custody. It's a gross breach of confidence. A great many men *would* have given you into custody before this. Well, well! So it has come to this! Very well, Mr. Blasted Hunt. You have pawned my property; well, this is the end. You can take a week's notice, and go: go, you THIEF!" It was with difficulty that the angry Borlase abstained from physical assault.

Hunt had slunk away, the disgraceful epithet burning in his ears. But the scene, that he had lived over again and again in the interval, was almost forgotten now. In a week he would be out of work. In a week, Mary must starve; this was the one dull agony that obscured all other consciousness. A leaking gutter-spout outside dripped—dop—dop—dop—on the stones; the recurrent sound impressed itself dully on his brain. Even the questions: "How can I tell her? How long can I keep it from her?"

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her?" had passed away. His mind was empty of thought—it could only ache.

The dog crept up to him and licked his hand. He started up. Yes! In two weeks' time they would be parted; they would have to go into the workhouse.

And Mr. Borlase was a Guardian of the Poor.

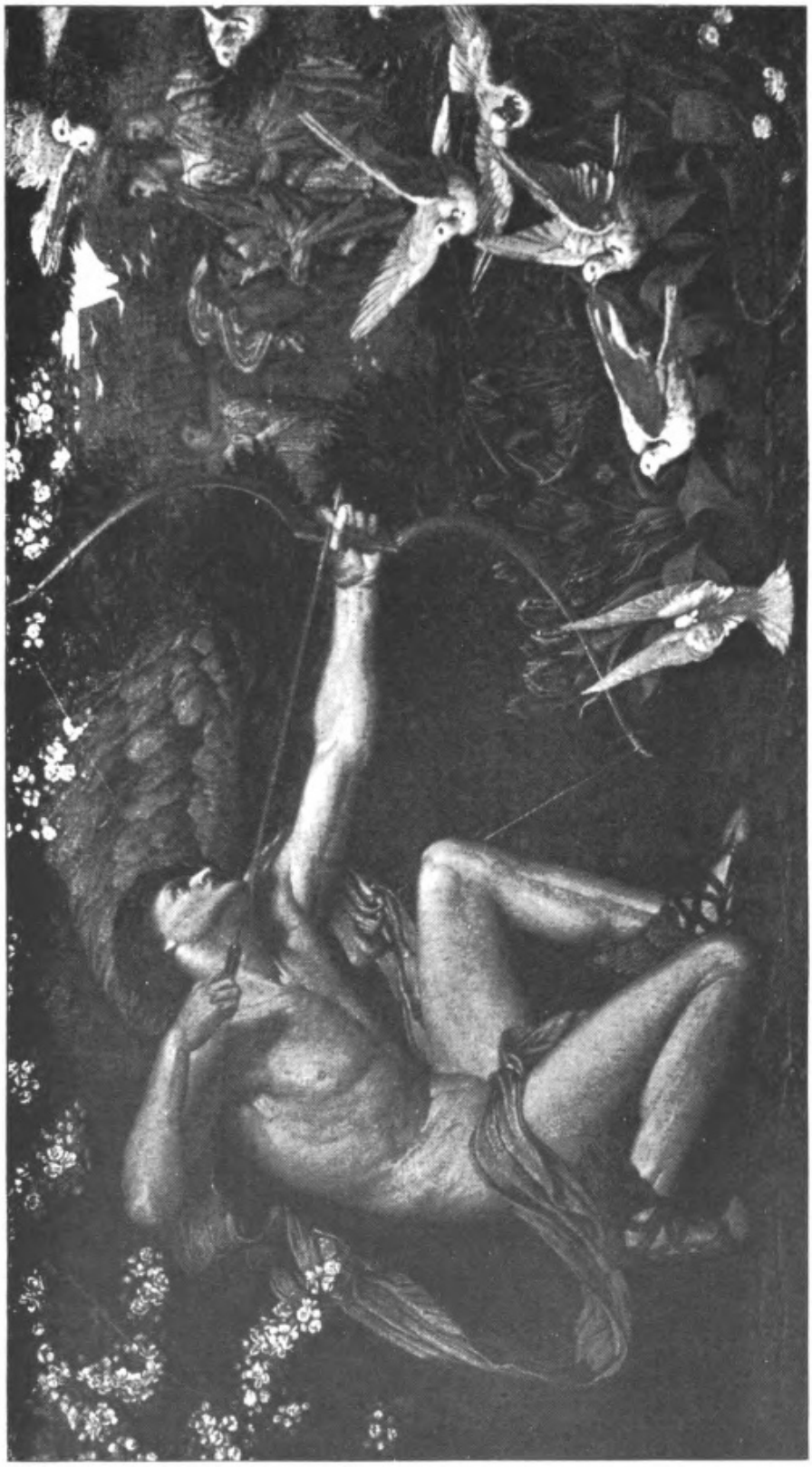
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Cupid

By Sydney Meteyard

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A Ballad of Victory

By Dollie Radford

With quiet step and gentle face,
With tattered cloak, and empty hands,
She came into the market place,
A traveller from many lands.

And by the costly merchandise,
Where people thronged in eager quest,
She paused awhile, with patient eyes,
And begged a little space for rest.

And where the fairest blossoms lay,
And where the rarest fruits were sent
From earth's abundant store, that day,
She turned and smiled in her content.

And where the meagre stall was bare,
Where no exultant voice was heard,
Beside the barren basket, there
She stayed to say her sweetest word.

Around

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Around her all the people came,
 Drawn by the magic of her speech,
To learn the music of her name,
 And whose the country she would reach.

She looked upon them, as she stood,
 Until her eyes were full of tears,
She said "My way is fair and good,
 And good my service to the years."

When for her beauty men besought
 To ease the sadness at her heart,
She murmured "You can give me nought
 But space to rest, ere I depart."

When for her tender healing ways,
 The women begged her love again,
She answered "In these bounteous days
 I may not let my love remain."

And when the children touched her hair,
 And put their hands about her face,
She sighed "There is so much to share,
 I well might bide a little space."

But ere the shadows longer grew,
 Or up the sky the evening stole,
She took the lonely way she knew,
 And journeyed onward to her goal.

She

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She turned away with steadfast air,
From all their choice of fair and sweet,
And as she turned they saw how bare
And bruisèd were her pilgrim feet.

Through many a rent and tattered fold,
As she went forward on her quest,
They saw the big wounds, deep and old,
The cruel scars upon her breast.

They called to her to wait, to learn
How they would cure her pain, to dwell
With them awhile; she did but turn
And wave her smiling last farewell.

And in their midst a woman rose,
And said "I do not know her name,
Nor whose the land to which she goes,
But well the roads by which she came.

"Among the lonely hills they lie,
Beyond the town's protecting wall,
Where travellers may faint and die,
And no one hearken when they call.

"Far up the barren heights they go,
Worn ever deeper night and day,
By toiling feet, and tears that flow
For some sweet flower to mark the way.

"And

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"And down the stony slopes they lead,
Through many a deep and dark ravine,
Where long ago it was decreed
Nor sun nor moonlight should be seen.

"Across the waste where no help is,
And through the winds and blinding showers,
Among the mist-bound silences,
And through the cold despairing hours.

"Among the lonely, lonely hills,
Ah me, I do not know her name,
Nor whose the bidding she fulfils,
But well the roads by which she came."

Then spoke a youth, who long, apart,
Had watched the people come and go,
With clearer eyes and wiser heart,
And cried, "Her face and name I know.

"And well the passage of her flight,
The starless plains she must ascend,
And well the darkness of the night,
In which her pilgrimage shall end.

"But stronger than the years that roll,
Than travail past, or yet to be,
She presses to her hidden goal,
A crownless, unknown Victory."

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A Book Plate for Isobel Verney Cave

By Mrs. A. J. Gaskin

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Four Prose Fancies

By Richard Le Gallienne

I—The Answer of the Rose

THE Sphinx and I sat in our little box at *Romeo and Juliet*. It was the first time she had seen that fairy-tale of passion upon the stage. I had seen it played once before—in Paradise. Therefore, I rather trembled to see it again in an earthly play-house, and as much as possible kept my eyes from the stage. All I knew of the performance—but how much was that!—was two lovely voices making love like angels; and when there were no words, the music told me what was going on. Love speaks so many languages.

One might as well look. It was as clear as moonlight to the tragic eye within the heart. The Sphinx was gazing on it all with those eyes that will never grow old, neither for years nor tears; but though I seemed to be seeing nothing but an advertisement of Paderewski pianos on the programme, I saw it—O didn't I see it?—all. The house had grown dark, and the music low and passionate, and for a moment no one was speaking. Only, deep in the thickets of my heart, there sang a tragic nightingale that, happily, only I could hear; and I said to myself, "Now the young fool is climbing the orchard wall! Yes, there go

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go Benvolio and Mercutio calling him; and now—'he jests at scars who never felt a wound'—the other young fool is coming out on the balcony. God help them both! They have no eyes—no eyes—or surely they would see the shadow that sings 'Love! Love! Love!' like a fountain in the moonlight, and then shrinks away to chuckle 'Death! Death! Death!' in the darkness!"

But, soft, what light from yonder window breaks!

The Sphinx turned to me for sympathy—this time it was the soul of Shakespeare in her eyes.

"Yes!" I whispered; "it is the Opening of the Eternal Rose, sung by the Eternal Nightingale!"

She pressed my hand approvingly; and while the lovely voices made their heavenly love, I slipped out my silver-bound pocket-book of ivory, and pressed within it the rose which had just fallen from my lips.

The worst of a great play is that one is so dull between the acts. Wit is sacrilege, and sentiment is bathos. Not another rose fell from my lips during the performance, though that I minded little, as I was the more able to count the pearls that fell from the Sphinx's eyes.

It took quite half a bottle of champagne to pull us up to our usual spirits, as we sat at supper at a window where we could see London spread out beneath us like a huge black velvet flower, dotted with fiery embroideries, sudden flaring stamens, and rows of ant-like fireflies moving in slow zig-zag processions along and across its petals.

"How strange it seems," said the Sphinx, "to think that for every two of those moving double-lights, which we know to be the eyes of hansoms, but which seem up here nothing but gold dots in a very barbaric pattern of black and gold, there are two human beings, no doubt at this time of night two lovers, throb-

bing

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bing with the joy of life, and dreaming, heaven knows, what dreams!"

"Yes," I rejoined; "and to them I'm afraid we are even more impersonal. From their little Piccadilly coracles our watch-tower in the skies is merely a radiant façade of glowing windows, and no one of all who glide by realises that the spirited illumination is every bit due to your eyes. You have but to close them, and every one will be asking what has gone wrong with the electric light."

A little nonsense is a great healer of the heart, and by means of such nonsense as this we grew merry again. And anon we grew sentimental and poetic, but—thank heaven! we were no longer tragic.

Presently I had news for the Sphinx. "The rose-tree that grows in the garden of my mind," I said, "desires to blossom."

"May it blossom indeed," she replied; "for it has been flowerless all this long evening; and bring me a rose fresh with all the dews of inspiration—no florist's flower, wired and artificially scented, no bloom of yesterday's hard-driven brains."

"I was only thinking," I said, "*à propos* of nightingales and roses, that though all the world has heard the song of the nightingale to the rose, only the nightingale has heard the answer of the rose. You know what I mean?"

"Know what you mean? Of course that's always easy enough," retorted the Sphinx, who knows well how to be hard on me.

"I'm so glad," I ventured to thrust back; "for lucidity is the first success of expression: to make others see clearly what we ourselves are struggling to see, believe with all their hearts what we are just daring to hope, is—well, the religion of a literary man?"

"Yes!

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"Yes! it's a pretty idea," said the Sphinx, once more pressing the rose of my thought to her brain; "and indeed it's more than pretty . . ."

"Thank you!" I said humbly.

"Yes, it's *true*—and many a humble little rose will thank you for it. For, your nightingale is a self-advertising bird. He never sings a song without an eye on the critics, sitting up there in their stalls among the stars. He never, or seldom, sings a song for pure love, just because he must sing it or die. Indeed, he has a great fear of death, unless—you will guarantee him immortality. But the rose, the trusting little earth-born rose, that must stay all her life rooted in one spot till some nightingale comes to choose her—some nightingale whose song maybe has been inspired and perfected by a hundred other roses, which are at the moment pot-pourri—ah, the shy bosom-song of the rose . . ."

Here the Sphinx paused, and added abruptly:

"Well—there is no nightingale worthy to hear it!"

"It is true," I agreed, "O trusting, little earth-born rose!"

"Do you know why the rose has thorns?" suddenly asked the Sphinx. Of course I knew; but I always respect a joke, particularly when it is but half-born—humourists always prefer to deliver themselves—so I shook my head.

"To keep off the nightingales, of course," said the Sphinx, the tone of her voice holding in mocking solution the words "Donkey" and "Stupid,"—which I recognised and meekly bore.

"What an excellent idea!" I said. "I never thought of it before. But don't you think it's a little unkind? For, after all, if there were no nightingales, one shouldn't hear so much about the rose; and there is always the danger that if the rose continues too painfully thorny, the nightingale may go off and seek, say, a more accommodating lily."

"I have

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"I have no opinion of lilies," said the Sphinx.

"Nor have I," I answered soothingly, "I much prefer roses—but . . . but . . ."

"But what?"

"But—well, I much prefer roses. Indeed I do."

"Rose of the World," I continued with sentiment, "draw in your thorns. I cannot bear them."

"Ah!" she answered eagerly, "that is just it. The nightingale that is worthy of the rose will not only bear, but positively love, her thorns. It is for that reason she wears them. The thorns of the rose properly understood are but the tests of the nightingale. The nightingale that is frightened of the thorns is not worthy of the rose—of that you may be sure. . . ."

"I am not frightened of the thorns," I managed to interject.

"Sing then once more," she cried, "the Song of the Nightingale."

And it was thus I sang:

"O Rose of the World, a nightingale,
A Bird of the World am I,
I have loved all the world and sung all the world,
But I come to your side to die.

"Tired of the world, as the world of me,
I plead for your quiet breast,
I have loved all the world and sung all the world—
But—where is the nightingale's nest?

"In a hundred gardens I sung the rose,
Rose of the World, I confess—
But for every rose I have sung before
I love you the more, not less.

"Perfect

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"Perfect it grew by each rose that died,
Each rose that has died for you,
The song that I sing—yea, 'tis no new song,
It is tried—and so it is true.

"Petal or thorn, yea! I have no care,
So that I here abide,
Pierce me, my love, or kiss me, my love,
But keep me close to your side.

"I know not your kiss from your scorn, my love,
Your breast from your thorn, my rose,
And if you must kill me, well, kill me, my love,
But—say 'twas the death I chose."

"Is it true?" asked the Rose.

"As I am a nightingale," I replied; and as we bade each other good-night, I whispered:

"When may I expect the Answer of the Rose?"

II—Spring by Parcel Post

"They've taken all the Spring from the country to the town—
Like the butter and the eggs and the milk from the cow . . ."

So began to jig and jingle my thoughts as in my letters and newspapers this morning I read, buried alive among the solitary fastnesses of the Surrey hills, the last news from town. The news I envied most was that spring had already reached London. "Now," ran a pretty article on spring fashions, "the sunshine makes bright the streets, and the flower-baskets, like huge bouquets, announce the gay arrival of spring." I looked up and out

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out through my hillside window. The black ridge on the other side of the valley stood a grim wall of burnt heather against the sky—which sky, like the bullets in the nursery rhyme, was made unmistakably of lead; a close rain was falling methodically, and, generally speaking, the world looked like a soaked mackintosh. It wasn't much like the gay arrival of spring, and grimly I mused on the advantages of life in town.

Certainly, it did seem hard, I reflected, that town should be ahead of us even in such a country matter as spring. Flower-baskets indeed! Why, we haven't as much as a daisy for miles around. It is true that on the terrace there the crocuses blaze like a street on fire, that the primroses thicken into clumps, lying among their green leaves like pounds of country butter; it is true that the blue cones of the little grape hyacinth are there, quaintly formal as a child's toy-flowers; yes! and the big Dutch hyacinths are already shamelessly *enceinte* with their buxom waxen blooms, so fat and fragrant—(One is already delivered of a fine blossom. Well, that is a fine baby, to be sure! say the other hyacinths, with babes no less bonny under their own green aprons—all waiting for the doctor sun). Then among the blue-green blades of the narcissus, here and there you see a stem topped with a creamish chrysalis-like envelope, from which will soon emerge a beautiful eye, rayed round with white wings, looking as though it were meant to fly, but remaining rooted—a butterfly on a stalk; while all the beds are crowded with indeterminate beak and blade, pushing and elbowing each other for a look at the sun, which, however, sulkily declines to look at them. It is true there is spring on the terrace, but even so it is spring imported from the town—spring bought in Holborn, spring delivered free by parcel post; for where would the terrace have been but for the city seedsman—that magician who sends you strangely spotted beans

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and mysterious bulbs in shrivelled cerements, weird little flower-mummies that suggest centuries of forgotten silence in painted Egyptian tombs. This strange and shrivelled thing can surely never live again, we say, as we hold it in our hands, seeing not the glowing circles of colour, tiny rings of Saturn, packed so carefully inside this flower-egg, the folds of green and silver silk wound round and round the precious life within.

But, of course, this is all the seedsman's cunning, and no credit to Nature ; and I repeat that were it not for railways and the parcel post—goodness knows whether we should ever get any spring at all in the country ! Think of the days when it had to travel down by stage-coach. For, left to herself, what is the best Nature can do for you with March well on the way ? Personally, I find the face of the country practically unchanged. It is, to all intents and purposes, the same as it has been for the last three or four months —as grim, as unadorned, as bleak, as draughty, and generally as comfortless as ever. There isn't a flower to be seen, hardly a bird worth listening to, not a tree that is not winter-naked, and not a chair to sit down upon. If you want flowers on your walks you must bring them with you ; songs, you must take a poet under your arm ; and if you want to rest, lean laboriously on your stick—or take your chance of rheumatism.

Of course your specialists, your botanists, your nature detectives, will tell you otherwise. They have surprised a violet in the act of blossoming ; after long and excited chase have discovered a clump of primroses in their wild state ; seen one butterfly, heard one cuckoo. But as one swallow does not make a summer, it takes more than one cuckoo to make a spring. I confess that only yesterday I saw three sulphur butterflies, with my own eyes ; I admit the catkins, and the silver-notched palm ; and I am told on good colour-authority that there is a lovely purplish bloom, almost like

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like plum-bloom, over certain copses in the valley; by taking thought, I have observed the long horizontal arms of the beech growing spurred with little forked branches of spear-shaped buds, and I see little green nipples pushing out through the wolf-coloured rind of the dwarf fir-trees. Spring is arming in secret to attack the winter—that is sure enough, but spring in secret is no spring for me. I want to see her marching gaily with green pennons, and flashing sun-blades, and a good band.

I want butterflies as they have them at the Lyceum—"butterflies all white," "butterflies all blue," "butterflies of gold," and I should particularly fancy "butterflies all black." But there, again, you see,—you must go to town, within hearing of Mrs. Patrick Campbell's *voix d'or*. I want the meadows thickly inlaid with buttercups and daisies; I want the trees thick with green leaves, the sky all larks and sunshine; I want hawthorn and wild roses—both at once; I want some go, some colour, some warmth in the world. O where are the pipes of Pan?

The pipes of Pan are in town, playing at street corners and in the centres of crowded circuses, piled high with flower-baskets blazing with refulgent flowery masses of white and gold. Here are the flowers you can only buy in town; simple flowers enough, but only to be had in town. Here are fragrant banks of violets every few yards, conflagrations of daffodils at every crossing, and narcissus in scented starry garlands for your hair.

You wander through the Strand, or along Regent Street, as through the meadows of Enna—sweet scents, sweet sounds, sweet shapes, are all about you; the town-butterflies, white, blue, and gold, "wheel and shine" and flutter from shop to shop, suddenly resurgent from their winter wardrobes as from a chrysalis; bright eyes flash and flirt along the merry, jostling street, while the sun pours out his golden wine overhead, splashing it about from gilded domes

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domes and bright-faced windows—and ever are the voices at the corners and the crossings calling out the sweet flower-names of the spring !

But here in the country it is still all rain and iron. I am tired of waiting for this slow-moving provincial spring. Let us to the town to meet the spring—for :

" They've taken all the spring from the country to the town—
Like the butter and the eggs and the milk from the cow ;
And if you want a primrose, you write to London now,
And if you need a nightingale, well—Whiteley sends it down."

III—About the Securities

WHEN I say that my friend Matthew lay dying, I want you so far as possible to dissociate the statement from any conventional, and certainly from any pictorial, conceptions of death which you may have acquired. Death sometimes shows himself one of those impersonal artists who conceal their art, and, unless you had been told, you could hardly have guessed that Matthew was dying, dying indeed sixty miles an hour, dying of consumption, dying because some one else had died four years before, dying too of debt.

Connoisseurs, of course, would have understood ; at a glance, would have named the sculptor who was silently chiselling those noble hollows in the finely modelled face,—that Pygmalion who turns all flesh to stone,—at a glance would have named the painter who was cunningly weighting the brows with darkness that the eyes might shine the more with an unaccustomed light. Matthew and I had long been students of the strange wandering artist, had begun

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begun by hating his art (it is ever so with an art unfamiliar to us !) and had ended by loving it.

"Let us see what the artist has added to the picture since yesterday," said Matthew, signing to me to hand him the mirror.

"H'm," he murmured, "he's had one of his lazy days, I'm afraid. He's hardly added a touch—just a little heightened the chiaroscuro, sharpened the nose a trifle, deepened some little the shadows round the eyes"

"O why," he presently sighed, "does he not work a little overtime and get it done? He's been paid handsomely enough"

"Paid," he continued, "by a life that is so much undeveloped gold-mine, paid by all my uncashed hopes and dreams"

"He works fast enough for me, old fellow," I interrupted, "there was a time, was there not, when he worked too fast for you and me? "

There are moments, for certain people, when such fantastic unreality as this is the truest realism. Matthew and I talked like this with our brains, because we hadn't the courage to allow our hearts to break in upon the conversation. Had I dared to say some real emotional thing, what effect would it have had but to set poor tired Matthew a-coughing? and it was our aim that he should die with as little to-do as practicable. The emotional in such situations is merely the obvious. There was no need for either of us to state the elementary feelings of our love. I knew that Matthew was going to die, and he knew that—I was going to live; and we pitied each other accordingly, though I confess my feeling for him was rather one of envy,—when it was not congratulation.

Thus, to tell the truth, we never mentioned "the hereafter." I don't believe it even occurred to us. Indeed, we spent the few hours that remained of our friendship in retailing the latest gathered of

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of those good stories with which we had been accustomed to salt our intercourse.

One of Matthew's anecdotes was, no doubt, somewhat suggested by the occasion, and I should add that he had always somewhat of an ecclesiastical bias, would, I believe, have ended some day as a Monsignor, a notable "Bishop Blougram."

His story was of an evangelistic preacher who desired to impress his congregation with the unmistakable reality of hell-fire. "You know the Black Country, my friends," he had declaimed, "you have seen it, at night, flaring with a thousand furnaces, in the lurid incandescence of which, myriads of unhappy beings, our fellow-creatures (God forbid!) snatch a precarious existence, you have seen them silhouetted against the yellow glare, running hither and thither as it seemed from afar, in the very jaws of the awful fire. Have you realised that the burdens with which they thus run hither and thither are molten iron, iron to which such a stupendous heat has been applied that it has melted, melted as though it had been sugar in the sun—well! returning to hell-fire, let me tell you this, that in hell they eat this fiery molten metal for ice-cream, yes! and are glad to get anything so cool."

It was thus we talked while Matthew lay dying, for why should we not talk as we had lived? We both laughed long and heartily over this story, perhaps it would have amused us less had Matthew not been dying; and then his kind old nurse brought in our lunch. We had both excellent appetites, and were far from indifferent to the dainty little meal which was to be our last but one together. I brought my table as close to Matthew's pillow as was possible, and he stroked my hand with tenderness in which there was a touch of gratitude.

"You are not frightened of the bacteria!" he laughed sadly, and then he told me, with huge amusement, how a friend (and a true

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true dear friend for all that) had come to see him a day or two before, and had hung over the end of the bed to say farewell, daring to approach no nearer, mopping his fear-perspiring brows with a handkerchief soaked in "Eucalyptus"!

"He had brought an anticipatory elegy too," said my friend, "written against my burial. I wish you'd read it for me" and he fidgetted for it in the nervous manner of the dying, and, finding it among his pillows, handed it to me saying, "you needn't be frightened of it. It is well dosed with Eucalyptus."

We laughed even more over this poem than over our stories, and then we discussed the terms of three cremation societies to which, at the express request of my friend, I had written a day or two before.

Then having smoked a cigar and drunk a glass of port together (for the assured dying are allowed to "live well"), Matthew grew sleepy, and tucking him beneath the counterpane, I left him, for after all, he was not to die that day.

Circumstances prevented my seeing him again for a week. When I did so, entering the room poignantly redolent of the strange sweet odour of antiseptics, I saw that the great artist had been busy in my absence. Indeed, his work was nearly at end. Yet to one unfamiliar with his methods, there was still little to alarm in Matthew's face. In fact, with the exception of his brain, and his ice-cold feet, he was alive as ever. And even to his brain had come a certain unnatural activity, a life as of the grave, a sort of vampire vitality, which would assuredly have deceived any one who had not known him. He still told his stories, laughed and talked with the same unconquerable humour, was in every way alert and practical, with this difference that he had forgotten he was going to die, and that the world in which he exercised his various faculties was another world to that in which, in spite of his delirium,

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delirium, we ate our last boiled fowl, drank our last wine, smoked our last cigar together. His talk was so convincingly rational, dealt with such unreal matters in so every day a fashion that you were ready to think that surely it was you and not he whose mind was wandering.

"You might reach that pocket-book, and ring for Mrs. Davies," he would say in so casual a way that of course you would ring. On Mrs. Davies's appearance he would be fumbling about among the papers in his pocket-book, and presently he would say, with a look of frustration that went to one's heart—"I've got a ten pound note somewhere here for you, Mrs. Davies, to pay you up till Saturday, but somehow I seem to have lost it. Yet it must be somewhere about. Perhaps you'll find it as you make the bed in the morning. I'm so sorry to have troubled you. . . ."

And then he would grow tired and doze a little on his pillow.

Suddenly he would be alert again and with a startling vividness tell me strange stories from the dreamland into which he was now passing.

I had promised to see him on the Monday, but had been prevented, and had wired to him accordingly. This was Tuesday.

"You needn't have troubled to wire," he said. "Didn't you know I was in London from Saturday to Monday?"

"The doctor and Mrs. Davies didn't know," he continued with the creepy cunning of the dying, "I managed to slip away to look at a house I think of taking—in fact I've taken it. It's in —in—now, where is it? Now isn't that silly? I can see it as plain as anything—yet I cannot, for the life of me, remember where it is, or the number. . . . It was somewhere St. John's Wood way . . . never mind, you must come and see me there, when we get in. . . ."

I said that he was dying in debt, and thus the heaven that lay about

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about his deathbed was one of fantastic Eldorados, sudden colossal legacies, and miraculous windfalls.

"I haven't told you," he said presently, "of the piece of good luck that has befallen me. You are not the only person in luck. I can hardly expect you to believe me, it sounds so like the Arabian nights. However, it's true for all that. Well, one of the little sisters was playing in the garden a few afternoons ago, making mud-pies or something of that sort, and she suddenly scraped up a sovereign. Presently she found two or three more, and our curiosity becoming aroused, a turn or two with the spade revealed quite a bed of gold, and the end of it was that on further excavating, the whole garden proved to be one mass of sovereigns. Sixty thousand pounds we counted and then what do you think—it suddenly melted away"

He paused for a moment, and continued more in amusement than regret:

"Yes—the government got wind of it, and claimed the whole lot as treasure-trove!"

"But not," he added slyly, "before I'd paid off two or three of my biggest bills. Yes—and—you'll keep it quiet, of course, there's another lot been discovered in the garden, but we shall take good care the government doesn't get hold of it this time, you may bet."

He told this wild story with such an air of simple conviction that, odd as it may seem, one believed every word of it. But the tale of his sudden good fortune was not ended.

"You've heard of old Lord Osterley," he presently began again. "Well, congratulate me, old man, he has just died and left everything to me. You know what a splendid library he had—to think that that will all be mine—and that grand old park through which we've so often wandered, you and I. Well, we shall need fear no gamekeeper

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gamekeeper now, and of course, dear old fellow, you'll come and live with me—like a prince—and just write your own books and say farewell to journalism for ever. Of course I can hardly believe it's true yet. It seems too much of a dream, and yet there's no doubt about it. I had a letter from my solicitors this morning, saying that they were engaged in going through the securities and—and—but the letter's somewhere over there, you might read it. No? can't you find it? It's there somewhere about I know. Never mind, you can see it again" he finished wearily.

"Yes!" he presently said, half to himself, "it will be a wonderful change! a wonderful change!"

At length the time came to say good-bye, a good-bye I knew must be the last, for my affairs were taking me so far away from him that I could not hope to see him for some days.

"I'm afraid, old man," I said, "that I mayn't be able to see you for another week."

"O never mind, old fellow, don't worry about me. I'm much better now—and by the time you come again we shall know all about the securities."

The securities! My heart had seemed like a stone, incapable of feeling, all those last unreal hours together, but the pathos of that sad phrase, so curiously symbolic, suddenly smote it with overwhelming pity, and the tears sprang to my eyes for the first time.

As I bent over him to kiss his poor damp forehead, and press his hand for the last farewell, I murmured:

"Yes—dear, dear old friend. We shall know all about the securities"

"THAT

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IV—The Donkey that Loved a Star

"THAT is how the donkey tells his love!" I said one day, with intent to be funny, as the prolonged love-whoop of a distant donkey was heard in the land.

"Don't be too ready to laugh at donkeys," said my friend. "For," he continued, "even donkeys have their dreams. Perhaps, indeed, the most beautiful dreams are dreamed by donkeys."

"Indeed," I said, "and now that I think of it, I remember to have said that most dreamers are donkeys, though I never expected so scientific a corroboration of a fleeting jest."

Now my friend is an eminent scientist and poet in one, a serious combination, and he took my remarks with seriousness at once scientific and poetic.

"Yes," he went on, "that is where you clever people make a mistake. You think that because a donkey has only two vowel-sounds wherewith to express his emotions, he has no emotions to express. But let me tell you, sir "

But here we both burst out laughing.

"You Golden Ass!" I said, "take a munch of these roses, perhaps they will restore you."

"No," he resumed, "I am quite serious. I have for many years past made a study of donkeys—high-stepping critics call it the study of Human Nature—however, it's the same thing—and I must say that the more I study them the more I love them. There is nothing so well worth studying as the misunderstood, for the very reason that everybody thinks he understands it. Now, to take another instance, most people think they have said the last word on a goose when they have called it 'a goose!'—but let me tell you, sir "

But

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But here again we burst out laughing.

"Dear goose of the golden eggs," I said, "pray leave to discourse on geese to-night—though lovely and pleasant would the discourse be—to-night I am all agog for donkeys."

"So be it," said my friend, "and if that be so, I cannot do better than tell you the story of the donkey that loved a star—keeping for another day the no less fascinating story of the goose that loved an angel."

By this time I was, appropriately, all ears.

"Well," he once more began, "there was once a donkey, quite an intimate friend of mine, and I have no friend of whom I am prouder, who was unpractically fond of looking up at the stars. He could go a whole day without thistles, if night would only bring him stars. Of course he suffered no little from his fellow-donkeys for this curious passion of his. They said well that it did not become him, for indeed it was no little laughable to see him gazing so sentimentally at the remote and pitiless heavens. Donkeys who belonged to Shakespeare Societies recalled the fate of Bottom, the donkey who had loved a fairy, but our donkey paid little heed. There is perhaps only one advantage in being a donkey—namely, a hide impervious to criticism. In our donkey's case it was rather a dream that made him forget his hide—a dream that drew up all the sensitiveness from every part, from hoof, and hide, and ears, so that all the feeling in his whole body was centred in his eyes and brain, and those, as we have said, were centred on a star. He took it for granted that his fellows should sneer and kick-out at him, it was ever so with genius among the donkeys, and he had very soon grown used to these attentions of his brethren, which were powerless to withdraw his gaze from the star he loved. For though he loved all the stars, as every individual man loves all women, there was one star he loved more than any

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any other; and standing one midnight among his thistles, he prayed a prayer, a prayer that some day it might be granted him to carry that star upon his back—which, he recalled, had been sanctified by the holy sign—were it but for ever so short a journey. Just to carry it a little way, and then to die. This to him was a dream beyond the dreams of donkeys.

"Now, one night," continued my friend, taking breath for himself and me, "our poor donkey looked up to the sky, and lo! the star was nowhere to be seen. He had heard it said that stars sometimes fall. Evidently his star had fallen. Fallen! but what if it had fallen upon the earth? Being a donkey, the wildest dreams seemed possible to him. And, strange as it may seem, there came a day when a poet came to his master and bought our donkey to carry his little child. Now, the very first day he had her upon his back, the donkey knew that his prayer had been answered, and that the little swaddled babe he carried was the star he had prayed for. And, indeed, so it was, for so long as donkeys ask no more than to fetch and carry for their beloved, they may be sure of beauty upon their backs. Now, so long as this little girl that was a star remained a little girl, our donkey was happy. For many pretty years she would kiss his ugly muzzle and feed his mouth with sugar—and thus our donkey's thoughts sweetened day by day, till from a natural pessimist he blossomed into a perfectly absurd optimist, and dreamed the donkiest of dreams. But one day, as he carried the girl who was really a star through the spring lanes, a young man walked beside her, and though our donkey thought very little of his talk—in fact, felt his plain 'hee-haw' to be worth all its smart chirping and twittering—yet it evidently pleased the maiden. It included quite a number of vowel-sounds, though if the maiden had only known, it didn't mean half so much as the donkey's plain monotonous declaration.

"Well,

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"Well, our donkey soon began to realise that his dream was nearing its end; and, indeed, one day his little mistress came bringing him the sweetest of kisses, the very best sugar in the very best shops, but for all that our donkey knew that it meant good-bye. It is the charming manner of English girls to be at their sweetest when they say good-bye.

"Our dreamer-donkey went into exile as servant to a woodcutter, and his life was lenient if dull, for the woodcutter had no sticks to waste upon his back; and next day his young mistress who was once a star took a pony for her love, whom some time after she discarded for a talented hunter, and, one fine day, like many of her sex, she pitched her affections upon a man—he too being a talented hunter. To their wedding came all the countryside. And with the countryside came a donkey. He carried a great bundle of firewood for the servants' hall, and as he waited outside, gazing up at his old loves the stars, while his master drank deeper and deeper within, he revolved many thoughts. But he is only known to have made one remark—in the nature, one may think, or a grim jest.

"'After all!' he was heard to say, 'she has married a donkey, after all.'

"No doubt it was feeble; but then our donkey was growing old and bitter, and hope deferred had made him a cynic."

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